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Trump ponders shutdown GOP wants to avoid before midterms

BY JENNIFER JACOBS
 AND ERIK WASSON
Bloomberg

President Donald Trump is asking advisers whether it would be good politics to provoke an October government shutdown fight over money for his border wall even though Republicans in Congress say a closure before the midterm elections in November would backfire.

Republican leaders thought they had persuaded Trump weeks ago to delay any such confrontation until later in the year, but the president raised the prospect of an earlier shutdown in conversations in recent days with at least three aides and outside advisers, according to people familiar with the matter.

Trump has long said a "good shutdown" may be needed to get his full \$23 billion in funds for a border wall. House Speaker Paul Ryan, of Wisconsin, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, of Kentucky, and other conservative lawmakers have told the president in recent weeks that a shutdown before the election is a bad idea, according to another person familiar with the matter.

With Democrats threatening to end the GOP majority in the House and several Senate seats for both parties in play in November, Republicans see a smoother government funding process as a way to show voters they can govern. Along the way they have ignored Trump's request for deep cuts to government programs as they seek bipartisan cooperation.

SEE SHUTDOWN ON PAGE 2

New book paints damning picture of president
Page 10



Shoppers check out at the post exchange at Camp Humphreys, South, Korea, in 2017.
 MARCUS FORT/Stars and Stripes

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

Business is BOOMING

Overseas military exchange stores thrive in face of 'retail apocalypse'

The so-called retail apocalypse may be hollowing out shopping malls from coast to coast, but that's a world away from government-run stores overseas that turn a healthy profit selling tax-free goods to a captive market.

Despite a booming economy, at least 94 million square feet of retail space will be closed in the United States this year, according to data in a Business Insider report published in April. That's on the heels of more than 100 million square feet shuttered in 2017.

Hundreds of stores operated by big-name retailers such as J.C. Penney Co., Sears, Kmart and Toys R Us have closed their doors this year.

But the situation is different for servicemembers stationed overseas who can shop at on-base malls run by the U.S. military. Exchanges and commissaries don't face the same threats as stores back home that blame an oversupply of retail space and growing e-commerce for the closures.

Last year, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service reported \$376 million in earnings and generated \$219 million

SEE RETAIL ON PAGE 4

MILITARY

Control of House could affect defense spending

By CLAUDIA GRISALES
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The House Armed Services Committee will take a closer look at Pentagon spending if Democrats take control of the lower chamber, a key lawmaker said Wednesday.

Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., his party's ranking member on the committee, made the comments at an annual defense conference as a growing share of political polls project Republicans could lose control of the House during the midterm elections in November.

In such a scenario, Smith could become chairman of the Armed Services Committee. He said the two parties have very similar views when it comes to defense spending, though there are differences.

"There is a lot more commonality in the sense we want to get the most out of the money we are spending," Smith told a crowd gathered at Pentagon City's Ritz-Carlton Hotel, where the media outlet Defense News was hosting an annual conference. "I think the Democrats have a much more realistic outlook over the course of the next 10 years of how much money is going to be available for defense," he said.

The midterm elections on Nov. 6 will

see all 435 House seats contested. Voters also will have their say on 35 seats in the Senate.

On Tuesday, a Washington Post-ABC poll projected voters prefer the Democratic candidate over their Republican opponent in their districts in the upcoming election by a 14-point margin — 52 to 38 percent — one of the largest gaps recorded this year in such surveys.

Smith said if the polls are correct, a Democrat-controlled House Armed Services Committee will look at some military issues with a more critical eye.

Among them, Smith said many Democrats, including himself, don't agree with Republicans when it comes to nuclear weapon spending. Also, military spending decisions must be made with an eye toward reducing a ballooning U.S. deficit.

"I think the Republican party and the Nuclear Posture Review contemplates a lot more nuclear weapons than I, and I think most Democrats, think we need," Smith said.

With the United States in debt for about \$22 trillion and as the deficit — the shortfall between federal revenue and spending — nears \$1 trillion in 2019, lawmakers must take a realistic look at how much

they can afford in defense spending, Smith said.

"We've got debt, we've got a deficit, we've got infrastructure problems, we've got health care, education. There's a whole lot that is necessary to make our country safe, secure and prosperous," Smith said. "And you have to look at it within the entire picture. How much of that pie can go to defense? And I think we are going to take a more realistic look at that and then try to figure out how to fund it."

However, Rep. Rob Wittman, R-Va., also a member of the Armed Services Committee, said at the same conference that some military spending priorities remain strong.

For example, the Navy is still working toward its 30-year shipbuilding plan to reach 355 ships, he said, with attack submarines being one of those important assets.

"I would suggest that there are some things that have to be addressed as far as not just the number of ships but the types of ships," Wittman said. "It is critical that we have a full complement of attack submarines."

As the National Defense Strategy noted, the United States must prepare for potential great power conflicts against Russia and China. For example, the United States

will have 45 attack submarines by 2029, while China will have 68, Wittman said.

"That is not acceptable," he said. "The most often requested asset by the combat commanders is the attack submarines."

The lawmakers comments were among several shared at the conference, where several top military officials also spoke. Adm. John Richardson, chief of naval operations, who was the conference's keynote speaker, said the service is making progress toward its effort to address the National Defense Strategy's new demands.

"The rules of the game have changed quite a bit and the competitors have changed," he said. "For our Navy to achieve the objectives of the National Defense Strategy, we have to embrace every avenue."

Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson echoed the comments for her service.

The National Defense Strategy "demands that we think through very difficult operational problems," Wilson told the crowd. It "explicitly recognizes the re-emergence of great power competition as the defining threat for which we must prepare. It's what our airman call the high-end fight. It guides us as a service."

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Shutdown: Republican senators predict shutdown will be avoided before midterms

FROM FRONT PAGE

In an interview with the Daily Caller published Wednesday, Trump backed away from a shutdown. He said, "I don't see even myself or anybody else closing down the country right now."

Congressional Republicans are trying to complete full-year funding bills for most governmental departments by Oct. 1 while postponing decisions on more contentious homeland security programs until after November as a way to avoid a shutdown.

"Our leaders have tried in conversations

with him to convince him that is the best outcome and makes the most sense," Sen. John Thune, of South Dakota, the chamber's No. 3 Republican, said in an interview Tuesday. "He still occasionally tweets about a government shutdown over the wall funding and that sort of thing, but I think in the end he's — I believe at least, and his team — of a view that we're all better off if we can keep the government funded."

The No. 2 Senate Republican, John Cornyn, of Texas, predicted a shutdown would be avoided. "We're working hard on

it," he said.

At least some portion of the government funding Republicans intend to pass by Oct. 1 would be in the form of a stopgap spending measure that would provide at least some border wall funding by simply extending the appropriation level from the current fiscal year.

Senate Appropriations Chairman Richard Shelby, of Alabama, said the White House hasn't indicated whether it would accept postponing wall funding.

"Our leaders have made clear it's in our

interest to fund the government. That's been my message to him," Shelby told reporters, referring to Trump. "The border wall is toxic to some people. That may have to wait until a later date."

Mark Meadows, of North Carolina, the chairman of the conservative House Freedom Caucus, predicted there wouldn't be a shutdown and that a stopgap continuing resolution would be signed. "I think we'll fund the government," he said. "A few of the minor bills may pass but the rest will be a CR."

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MILITARY

Paratrooper dies in Italy motorcycle accident

VICENZA, Italy — A soldier with the 173rd Airborne Brigade was killed Tuesday when he apparently lost control of his motorcycle on the winding road to Asiago, military officials said.

The soldier, 25, has not been identified pending notification of kin.

The paratrooper apparently went into a skid about 4 p.m. while negotiating hairpin turns on the Salita Del Cost, according to local media reports. He then hit a road sign. The soldier died at the scene.

The soldier was traveling with a friend on a second motorcycle who was not hurt, Caserma Edler officials said.

Naval Academy allows ponytails for females

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Naval Academy is allowing female midshipmen to wear ponytails and other longer hairstyles.

The policy was announced during a Board of Visitors meeting Tuesday.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson first announced the Navy's changes in July, saying they make the Navy more inclusive.

The academy conducted its own review before accepting the changes.

The regulation allows braids and ponytails in service, working and physical training uniforms. The width or diameter of hair buns can't extend beyond the width of the back of the head. The academy is stipulating that ponytails cannot be seen from the front.

Vice Adm. Ted Carter, the superintendent, said the incoming class is one of the academy's most diverse. He said the class of 2022 is about 28 percent female.

Naval Academy to begin officer aptitude push

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Naval Academy's superintendent says a new initiative to identify midshipmen who lack the overall aptitude to be naval officers will be implemented throughout the school this year.

Vice Adm. Ted Carter discussed the initiative before the academy's Board of Visitors Tuesday.

Carter said he started a pilot program at the academy last spring because he was concerned that a small number of midshipmen didn't measure up in some areas.

In addition to academic and physical requirements, midshipmen are expected to demonstrate aptitude in leadership, character, professionalism, teamwork and judgment.

Carter said the new initiative aims to find shortcomings in midshipmen much earlier on so they can be addressed before students enter their last year.

He said new Midshipmen Development Reports will create clearly defined measures of performance.

From staff and wire reports

US mulls troop increase in Greece

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

The United States may increase drills and rotate more troops through bases in Greece, which offer logistic support for U.S. forces within range of hot spots in northern Africa and the eastern Mediterranean, America's top military leader said.

Greek officials have raised the possibility of expanding U.S. access to those bases, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph Dunford told reporters in Athens on Tuesday. "[They] made a general overture saying they would be willing to consider that, and I certainly was enthusiastic about the possibility," Dunford told the Pentagon's internal news service.

Dunford said U.S. European Command and the State Department would work with their Greek counterparts on the plans.

Increased access to Greek bases would enable more troops to rotate through for joint training initiatives and could possibly lead to enhanced intelligence and reconnaissance efforts. Unrest in nearby Libya and Syria are persistent security concerns.

The U.S. military has long operated out of bases in Greece, including Naval Support Activity in Souda Bay and Greece's Larissa Air Force Base, where the U.S. operates MQ-9 Reaper drones.

"We ... have taken advantage of Souda Bay — it's a critical piece of infrastructure here in the region — and Greece has also been open to expanding training opportunities for our forces that are stationed in Europe, in particular for U.S. Army units to do training with helicopters," Dunford told DOD News.

While the U.S. wants to do more in Greece, Washington isn't looking to establish a large



STEVEN BEARDSLEY/Stars and Stripes

Crewmembers and sailors gather around a C-2A cargo aircraft at the naval base at Souda Bay, Crete. The installation has long served as a remote station to supply and replenish ships operating in the eastern Mediterranean.

base for a lot of forward-based troops.

Instead, the idea is for a light military presence with troops rotating in and out, Dunford said.

"If you look at geography and you look at current operations in Libya and current operations in Syria; you look at potential operations in the eastern Mediterranean, the opportunities here are pretty significant," he said.

Dunford's visit to Greece comes as NATO is increasingly emphasizing security concerns

along its southern doorstep. The alliance recently set up a counterterrorism intelligence center in Naples to monitor regional threats. Increased Russian naval activity in the Mediterranean Sea also has the alliance's attention.

"They (the Greeks) are looking around, and the U.S. is still the best partner available to them," a military official told DOD News.

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USS Michael Murphy joins exercise Down Under

By CHRISTIAN LOPEZ
Stars and Stripes

The USS Michael Murphy is in Australia for 16 days of drills aimed at fostering and strengthening security and humanitarian partnerships throughout the Indo-Pacific region.

The Hawaii-based destroyer entered Australian waters just in time for Friday's opening ceremony in Darwin. Kakadu 2018 is expected to involve more than 23 ships and submarines, 21 aircraft and about 3,000 personnel from more than 27 nations.

It's the second time the United States has participated in the biennial event, which the Royal Australian Navy says is the country's largest naval exercise.

Other participants include India and China, which is joining Kakadu for the first time, according to an Australia Broadcasting Corp.

report.

The U.S. disinvited the communist state to July's Rim of the Pacific naval drills over Beijing's occupation and militarization of disputed islets in the South China Sea.

The 7th Fleet commander, Vice Adm. Phil Sawyer, who attended Friday's opening ceremony, said Kakadu demonstrates Australia's commitment to freedom of navigation in the Pacific.

"Hosting a massive, multilateral exercise like this shows the Royal Australian Navy's strong leadership and commitment to providing security in a free and open Indo-Pacific," he said in a Navy statement issued Friday.

The 7th Fleet visited Australia earlier this year to celebrate the 75th anniversary of its formation in Brisbane.

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MORGAN NALL/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

The destroyer USS Michael Murphy is anchored in Darwin Harbor on Friday for Australia exercise Kakadu 2018.

Naval Academy midshipman to be court-martialed in drug case

By BRIAN WITTE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Naval Academy's superintendent is moving ahead with the court-martial of a midshipman accused of distributing illegal drugs.

Vice Adm. Ted Carter, the academy's superintendent, told the academy's Board of Visitors Tuesday that an arraignment for Midshipman Zachary Williams is scheduled for Monday at the Washington Navy Yard.

"The U.S. Naval Academy referred Midshipman Williams' case to a general court-martial following Article 32 preliminary hearing into the matter," said Cmdr. David

McKinney, an academy spokesman, referring to a hearing that determines whether the accused will go to trial in a court-martial. "The referred charges allege Midshipman Williams engaged in the wrongful possession, distribution, introduction and use of controlled substances."

A trial has been set for March. Prosecutors have said Williams sold and used drugs while going to concerts with other midshipmen, and they have contended his actions were particularly offensive because he introduced drugs to the academy. Drugs named in the case include cocaine, ecstasy, mushrooms and ketamine, which is an animal tranquilizer that can cause hallucinations.

Antoinette O'Neill, Williams' civilian attorney who is retired from the Air Force and is a lawyer with Patriots Law Group, declined to comment Monday.

Williams is accused of acquiring the drugs on the dark web, where people search for drugs through secret web browsers and buy them using encrypted channels, code names and virtual currencies.

The charges are based on an investigation by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service that began in November. As a result of the investigation, six midshipmen were kicked out of the academy for using illegal substances and five were disciplined for drug-related violations.

MILITARY

Retail: Overseas exchanges avoid state-level red tape

FROM FRONT PAGE

to support military quality-of-life programs such as on-base gymnasiums, bowling alleys and childcare centers. That's only \$5,000 less than what exchanges generated for military communities four years ago, according to the AAFES.

It returned \$26 million to Pacific military communities in fiscal year 2017 and \$11 million so far in 2018.

Those statistics don't include the Navy Exchange and Marine Corps Exchange, which serve Navy and Marine Corps bases.

Exchanges resonate

A visit to the Yokota Community Center — a three-story shopping mall at Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo that houses an exchange, food court and numerous other shops — reveals an organization that appears to be in good health.

When a sale is on, customers can be seen lined up at cash registers, carts full of discounted items from brands such as Under Armour, Nike, Apple, Kuhl, Estee Lauder and North Face. At lunch, after work or on weekends, food court tables are crammed with people munching fast food and

other goodies.

"What resonates with the typical American resonates with military shoppers," said Col. Scott Maskery, commander of AAFES Pacific, which comprises 35 exchanges in Japan, Okinawa, Korea, Guam, Saipan, Hawaii, American Samoa and Kwajalein.

"We give very competitive prices on all our products," he said. "Part [of that] is to do with the tax-free benefits but also supply chain management."

Troop numbers are among the factors that determine exchange sales. During World War II, there were as many as 6,000 stores worldwide. These days there are only 122.

Other things driving the success of exchange stores include independent shops selling everything from souvenirs to exotic furniture, first-run movies at on-base theaters, national brands and in-store concept shops specializing in products from the likes of Martha Stewart and Michael Kors, Maskery said.

Overseas exchanges also aren't subject to state-level red tape such as high minimum wages mandated in some U.S. cities. The minimum wage for jobs on overseas bases is the federal minimum of \$7.25 per hour.



LEON COOK/Stars and Stripes

People eat lunch at the Yokota Community Center food court at Yokota Air Base, Japan, on Friday.

But the picture isn't all rosy for the exchanges. Web retailers such as Amazon are popular with servicemembers who can take advantage of domestic shipping rates to overseas bases.

"Online sales have impacted some products," said Shinobu Matsui, who manages the Yokota exchange.

However, the AAFES is also an e-commerce player. Its website, shopmyexchange.com, caters exclusively to Defense Department personnel.

The website offers tax-free sales and free shipping for people using the AAFES' Military Star Card or on orders that cost more than \$49. In the next few months,

the exchange is expected to begin a service that allows shoppers to collect items purchased online at some on-base stores.

Military connections

Most of the AAFES' 35,000 employees — including the 5,000 in the Pacific — have some sort of association with the military.

"Eighty-five percent of our associates have a military connection," Maskery said. "They serve or they have family in uniform. Six thousand military spouses work for us, and since 2010 the exchange has hired more than 1,200 wounded warriors."

AAFES Yokota employee Jamie

Blair, 33, is an Air Force spouse who grew up on Army bases and has fond memories of childhood visits to the exchange in Vilseck, Germany.

"They had a toy shop next to the [post exchange] and it was fun going there," she said. "Renting movies was another big deal for us because it was hard to find English films off base. It was a way for us to connect with family in the States."

At Yokota, Blair is on the other side of the counter.

"The culture for me is perfect," she said. "I have two kids, and it's some extra income."

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THE NEW SANNO

PACIFIC

Man arrested in Taiwan left USMC as private

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A former Marine arrested last month in connection with a grisly drug-related homicide on Taiwan has ties to the nearby island of Okinawa and may have been disciplined prior to leaving the service nearly a decade ago.

Ewart Odane Bent, 30, was taken into custody Aug. 24 by Taiwanese police in the killing of Ranganathan Sanjay Ryan, 43, a Canadian who was hacked to death with machetes and dismembered on the evening of Aug. 21, according to the English-language Taiwan News.

Both Bent and Ryan were English teachers who were reportedly involved with a local drug ring.

Bent served in the Marines from Dec. 6, 2006, to Aug. 7, 2009, as a cryogenics equipment operator, Marine Manpower and Reserve Affairs spokeswoman Yvonne Carlock said in a statement emailed to Stars and Stripes. His last duty station was on Okinawa with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 36, Marine Aircraft Group 36, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. He attained the rank of private on Dec. 2, 2008.

"Bent's rank at discharge is indicative of the fact that the charac-

ter of his service was incongruent with Marine Corps' expectations and standards," she said.

Carlock declined to release a copy of Bent's personnel file pending review, nor could she comment further because Bent was not punished through a punitive process such as a special or general court-martial.

"Due to the associated administrative processes, further details are not releasable," she said.

Bent isn't listed as having been deployed, Carlock said. He did not receive any personal awards but was decorated with the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and National Defense Service Medal.

'Heated disputes'

It is unclear when Bent moved to Taiwan; however, Taiwanese media have reported he arrived at the behest of Israeli-American tattoo shop owner and former Israel Defense Forces soldier Oren Shlomo Mayer, 37. The Hong Kong-based tabloid Daily Apple described Mayer as a "drug dealer" and the "largest supplier of marijuana in northern Taiwan."

Mayer's LinkedIn page says he moved to Taiwan in 2015 after living and working in California.



Ewart Odane Bent, 30, has been arrested in Taiwan in the slaying of a 43-year-old Canadian man.



Bent shows off his Marine Corps tattoo in this image shared to his Instagram account. He served from 2006 until 2009.

Bent taught at Annie's English cram school in New Taipei's Linkou District as well as two other branches in New Taipei City's Xinzhuang District, according to the Taiwan News. He reportedly slept on a couch at Mayer's shop for a time and also lived in a dor-

mitory provided by the school.

Taiwanese media said Ryan became known to police after an investigation into marijuana sales led them back to him earlier this year. He was reportedly arrested with a large amount of marijuana but was released.

Bent and Mayer were also arrested in recent weeks on drug charges, the Taiwan News reported. They suspected Ryan had informed on them.

Ryan had "heated disputes" with Mayer and Bent over drugs, the Taiwan News said.

The slaying

Mayer and Bent are alleged to have ambushed Ryan while he walked his dog at a riverside park in New Taipei City.

The pair allegedly moved Ryan to a secluded area, tied him down with a chain and hacked him with the machetes, the Taiwan News said. They then severed his head and limbs with a wire saw, and the body parts were placed in trash bags and dumped in the Xindian River. The dog ran home and reportedly led two of Ryan's friends to his body the next day.

Police began to focus the homicide investigation on Bent because information on Ryan's phone showed they had argued

over drugs, the Taiwan News said. Bent's phone placed him in the area at the time of the killing.

Bent was taken to the New Taipei Public Prosecutor's Office after his arrest, but it remains unclear whether he has been officially charged in the slaying.

He had a bail hearing Aug. 26 and was not released, the English-language newspaper Taipei Times reported. His communications with the outside world are reportedly being restricted.

Bent has denied involvement in the slaying, said the Taiwan News, citing the Daily Apple.

Mayer fled to the Philippines shortly after the slaying, the report said. Taiwan has been working with the Philippine government to have him extradited.

Police also arrested Wu Hsuan, 21, a Taiwanese-Canadian man who works as a promoter for a Taipei nightclub, the Taiwan News reported. Wu allegedly coluded with Bent and Mayer in selling drugs at the club.

He admitted to police that he purchased two machetes for the men on Aug. 18 and stood lookout while they killed Ryan, the Taiwan News said. He was released on about \$10,000 bail, and his attorneys have since denied he was present at the time of the killing.

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WAR ON TERRORISM

Soldier who died in Afghanistan was leader, mentor

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Bolyard, who was killed in an apparent insider attack on Monday, had a calm demeanor and a gift for seeing what needed to be done in a difficult situation, fellow soldiers said.

Nathan Metcalf, who served under Bolyard in the 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, recalled an awful moment in Baghdad, where the unit was deployed from 2007 to 2009. An explosion rocked the guard tower Metcalf and his troops were manning and a fire-fight broke out.

Bolyard was among the troops, making sure everything was all right, Metcalf recalled. When the shooting stopped, Bolyard's first sergeant's mind seemed to shift gears, looking ahead to what came next.

"The action is over now, Sgt. Metcalf, I will give you the steps you need to follow to take care of your soldiers," Metcalf remembers Bolyard saying.

Bolyard, 42, of Thornton, W.Va., died of wounds he suffered in the Monday attack

US: Killing was by Afghan police

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An attack on U.S. troops in Afghanistan that killed one American was carried out by a member of the Afghan national police who is now in Afghan government custody, a U.S. official said Tuesday. It was the second so-called insider attack there this summer.

Lt. Col. Martin O'Donnell, a spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition in Kabul, said in a telephone interview Tuesday

that Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Bolyard was killed in eastern Afghanistan by an Afghan policeman. Another U.S. servicemember was wounded; O'Donnell said that person's wounds are not life-threatening.

O'Donnell said in a telephone interview Tuesday that it now has been "definitely" determined that the attacker was an Afghan policeman. The shooter fled the scene but was apprehended by Afghans, he added.

scene immediately after the shooting but was captured and detained by the security forces.

Army 1st Sgt. Brad Lee, another soldier who served with Bolyard in 2014, said Bolyard had mentored him as he rose through the ranks.

"He genuinely cared. I truly loved the man. He was one of my heroes," he said.

Bolyard was always calm, even when delivering bad news, Lee told Stars and Stripes.

"When my battalion got extended in 2014, he walked up and asked how I was

doing," he said. "Told me there were some things he couldn't share, but he thought it would be OK, and then he put his hand on my shoulder and said to make sure my boys were ready."

Bolyard's son, Preston, said on Facebook that his father had been planning to return from deployment and retire in less than two months.

The elder Bolyard arrived in Afghanistan in February.

Bolyard, the sixth U.S. fatality in Afghanistan in 2018, is the second U.S. servicemember killed in a suspected insider attack this year. It follows an incident in July in Uruzgan province that left Army Cpl. Joseph Maciel dead and two other servicemembers wounded.

In 2017, a total of six insider attacks targeted U.S. personnel, killing three Americans and wounding 11, according to Pentagon reports to Congress.

"Command Sgt. Maj. Tim Bolyard was an outstanding, caring leader who our soldiers deserved and his loss is immeasurable," said U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Scott Jackson, 1st SFAB commander, in a statement. "We will honor his legacy and care for his family as we remember that he died doing what he loved, surrounded by the soldiers he loved."

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Pentagon IDs soldier who died from noncombat injury at Bagram Air Field

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

The Pentagon on Wednesday identified the second soldier who died this week in Afghanistan as Staff Sgt. Diobanjo S. Sanagustin.

Sanagustin, 32, from National City, Calif., died Tuesday from a noncombat injury at Bagram Air Field, the military said in a statement.

After joining the Army as an infantryman in May 2007, Sanagustin deployed three times—once each to Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan. The 11-year Army veteran arrived at Fort Carson, Colo., in January, where he was assigned to 4th Battalion, 9th In-

fantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

He was a squad leader in Company B, said Lt. Col. David Uthlaut, 4th Battalion commander.

"He made a lasting impact on the Manchu formation and we will forever cherish his memory," Uthlaut said in a statement. "Our deepest condolences are with the Sanagustin family."

His awards and decorations include two Army Commendation Medals, seven Army Achievement Medals, four Good Conduct Medals, two Iraq Campaign Medals with Campaign Star, a Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the Expert Infantryman's

Badge.

He was the seventh U.S. fatality in Afghanistan so far this year and the first noncombat death. Noncombat deaths include those caused by accident, illness, self-inflicted injury or homicide not caused by the enemy.

Of the 16 total noncombat deaths in Afghanistan since the start of Operation Freedom's Sentinel, the U.S. mission in Afghanistan that began after the withdrawal of most combat forces in December 2014, 11 have been the result of accident, according to Defense Casualty Analysis System data.

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Group founder's death unlikely to weaken militants

By KATHY GANNON
Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — The death of Jalaluddin Haqqani, the founder of Afghanistan's outlawed militant network that bears his name, is unlikely to weaken the group that is considered the most formidable of the Taliban's fighting forces.

The Taliban said Haqqani died Monday at age 71 after reports of years of ill health, including Parkinson's disease. Because of his infirmity, stewardship of the organization had been given to one of his 12 sons, Sirajuddin, whose military prowess is credited with plotting and carrying out some of

more audacious attacks assigned to the network.

The younger Haqqani is also deputy head of the Taliban, who have waged increasingly sophisticated and coordinated attacks against Afghanistan's struggling security forces. Washington's own watchdog in a recent report said nearly half of Afghanistan is either under the control of the Taliban or influenced by the religious militia.

Jalaluddin Haqqani, once hailed as a freedom fighter by U.S. President Ronald Reagan for opposing the Soviet Union's presence in Afghanistan during the Cold War, had been paralyzed for

the past 10 years, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahed told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. Reports of his death were widespread in 2015, and he had not been heard from in several years.

In announcing his death, Mujahed called Haqqani a religious scholar and exemplary warrior. The United States declared the Haqqani network a terrorist organization in 2012, and it has been one of the fiercest opponents for U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan.

The elder Haqqani's death is not expected to affect the network's military might or strategy.



RAHMAT GUL/AP

An injured boy is held up outside a hospital following a deadly attack in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Wednesday. Twin bombings killed at least 20 people and wounded many others, Afghan officials said.

Two reporters among those killed in twin attacks in Afghanistan

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Twin bombings at a wrestling training center in a Shiite neighborhood of Afghanistan's capital on Wednesday killed at least 20 people, including two reporters, and wounded 70, Afghan officials said.

Interior Ministry spokesman Najib Danish said a suicide bomber struck at the center and then a car bomb went off nearby.

Sediqullah Tawhidi, a senior member of the Afghan journalists' federation, said a reporter and a cameraman working for Tolo TV were among those killed, and that another local TV reporter was wounded.

No one immediately claimed the attacks, but they bore the hall-

marks of the country's Islamic State affiliate, which has carried out a wave of deadly bombings against minority Shiites.

Gen. David Amin, the Kabul police chief, said at least seven police were among those wounded in the car bomb explosion.

Elsewhere in Afghanistan, a roadside bomb killed a district police chief and another policeman in the northern Badkhis province, according to Jamshid Shahabi, spokesman for the provincial governor.

No one claimed the attack, but Shahabi said it was likely carried out by the Taliban, who are active in the province and frequently target security forces and government officials.

NATION

Kavanaugh stresses independence at hearing

By MARK SHERMAN
AND LISA MASCARO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh repeatedly stressed the importance of judicial independence on the second day of his confirmation hearing Wednesday as he faced questioning from senators, including Democrats who fear he would be President Donald Trump's man on the high court. But he declined to address whether Trump could be subpoenaed or could pardon himself.

Pressed by Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley, a Republican, on whether he would be independent from the president who nominated him, Kavanaugh responded, "No one is above the law."

But asked later by the panel's top Democrat, Sen. Dianne Feinstein, of California, whether a president can be required to respond to a subpoena, Kavanaugh said, "I can't give you an answer on that hypothetical question."

The Supreme Court has never answered that question, and it is among the most important at Kavanaugh's hearing since Trump could face a subpoena in special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation.

Kavanaugh also refused to say whether he thinks a president can pardon himself — or provide a pardon in exchange for a bribe or pardon someone on the understanding that the person wouldn't testify against the president.

"I'm not going to answer hypothetical questions of that sort," Kavanaugh said, responding to questions from Sen. Patrick Leahy, of Vermont.

Day two of Kavanaugh's confirmation hearings began much



Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh holds a pocket copy of the Constitution as he testifies before the Senate Judiciary Committee in Washington on Wednesday.

MANUEL BALCE CONETA/AP

'The first thing that makes a good judge is independence, not being swayed by political or public pressure.'

Brett Kavanaugh
Supreme Court nominee

as the first with protesters often interrupting proceedings. More than a dozen protesters were hauled out of the hearing room shouting objections to Kavanaugh's nomination.

Despite interruptions, senators plunged into their initial opportunity to publicly question Kavanaugh in what was expected to be a marathon day of examination.

The hearing has strong political overtones ahead of the November election, but Democrats lack the votes to block Kavanaugh's confirmation. They fear Kavanaugh will push the court to the right on

abortion, guns and other issues, and that he will side with Trump in cases stemming from Mueller's investigation of Trump's 2016 campaign.

Addressing some of those concerns, Kavanaugh said that "the first thing that makes a good judge is independence, not being swayed by political or public pressure," He cited historic court cases including *Brown v. Board of Education* that desegregated schools and *U.S. v. Nixon* that compelled the president to turn over the Watergate tapes — a ruling that Kavanaugh had previously questioned.

"That takes some backbone," he said of the justices who decided those cases.

Asked about court precedents, the importance of previously settled cases including the landmark 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision that ensures access to abortion, Kavanaugh said, "Respect for precedent is important. ... Precedent is rooted right in the Constitution itself."

Kavanaugh noted that *Roe* was reaffirmed in a 1992 decision, *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. He likened it to another controversial, landmark Supreme Court decision, the *Miranda* ruling about the rights of criminal suspects. Kavanaugh said the court specifically reaffirmed both decisions in later cases that made them "precedent on precedent."

Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, praised Kavanaugh for hiring female lawyers as his clerks as a judge on the District of Columbia court of appeals, and then posed questions about whether Kavanaugh was aware of sexual harassment allegations against retired circuit court Judge Alex Kozinski in California. Kavanaugh had clerked for Kozinski in the early 1990s and considered the judge a friend and mentor.

Kavanaugh said he had known nothing about the allegations until they were disclosed last year. "It was a gut punch for me," he said, and he was "shocked, disappointed, angry."

Trump nominated Kavanaugh, 53, to fill the seat of retired Justice Anthony Kennedy. The change could make the court more conservative on a range of issues.

Republicans hope to confirm Kavanaugh in time for the first day of the new Supreme Court term, Oct. 1.

In stressing his independence,

Kavanaugh pushed back against suggestions that after his time on independent counsel Kenneth Starr's team investigating Bill Clinton in the 1990s, he no longer believes a sitting president should be investigated. He said his views did shift after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks but his ideas about revisiting the special counsel law were merely suggestions.

"They were some ideas for Congress to consider. They were not my constitutional views," he told the panel.

The judge's work in the George W. Bush White House also has figured in the hearing, particularly as Democratic senators have fought for greater access to his emails and other documents during his three years as staff secretary. Republicans have declined to seek those papers, and instead have gathered documents from his work as White House counsel to Bush.

The most likely outcome of this week's hearings is a vote along party lines to send Kavanaugh's nomination to the full Senate. Majority Republicans can confirm Kavanaugh without any Democratic votes, though they'll have little margin for error.

Republicans will hold a slim 51-49 majority in the Senate once Jon Kyl, the former Arizona senator, is sworn in to fill the seat held by the late Sen. John McCain.

Sens. Susan Collins, of Maine, and Lisa Murkowski, of Alaska, are the only two Republicans even remotely open to voting against Kavanaugh, though neither has said she would do so. Abortion rights supporters are trying to appeal to those senators, who both favor abortion access.

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NATION

Tropical Storm Gordon kills child in Fla.

By Jay Reeves
Associated Press

DAUPHIN ISLAND, Ala. — Tropical Storm Gordon never became a hurricane but it was deadly all the same, killing a child by blowing a tree onto a mobile home as it made landfall. The storm later weakened into a depression on Wednesday but remained dangerous, dumping rain, spawning tornadoes and kicking up heavy surf in its wake.

The National Hurricane Center said Gordon was weakening on a path into Arkansas after striking the coast at 70 mph, just shy of hurricane strength, near Pascagoula, Miss. The remnants will likely cause flash flooding across parts of seven states and as far north as Iowa in the coming days.

The storm was going out swinging. Forecasters said radar spotted possible tornadoes spun off by the storm overnight in southern Alabama and the Florida panhandle, and more were possible through Wednesday night in Mississippi and western Alabama.

There were no immediate reports of injuries or significant damage, other than the child killed by a large oak tree branch that fell onto a mobile home in Pensacola, Fla. Neighbor Amanda Ray told the Pensacola News Journal that she heard a crack and a scream as the limb fell around 9 p.m. Tuesday.

"It was just awful," she said, adding that the sounds were almost indistinguishable from the storm's howling winds. The Escambia County Sheriff's Office



DAN ANDERSON/AP

Trucks with the Alabama Department of Transportation work to block off a flooded part of U.S. Highway 98 while fighting rain from Tropical Storm Gordon on Wednesday in Spanish Fort, Ala.

posted on its Facebook page that responding deputies discovered the child had been killed. Officials haven't released the child's identity.

Escambia County received 10 calls overnight for downed trees in roadways, along with multiple reports of arcing power lines as the storm blew through with peak gusts of 61 mph. Beachgoers in the area were being warned Wednesday that it's too early to return to the water; dangerous rip currents prompted red-flag warnings, meaning it's illegal to enter the Gulf of Mexico.

Driftwood and other debris made for hazardous driving early Wednesday on the causeway to Dauphin Island, Ala., which was partly flooded by seawater overnight, leaving people to drive over sand and around lawn furniture on the main road. Siding was peeled off of some houses, but Mayor Jeff Collier said "for the most part, we did OK."

The center predicted total rain amounts of 4-8 inches in the Florida panhandle and parts of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa and Illinois. Rainfall could be even

more intense in isolated places, dropping up to 12 inches through early Saturday.

More than 27,000 customers were without power as Gordon began pushing ashore, mostly in coastal Alabama and the western tip of the Florida Panhandle around Pensacola, with a few hundred in southeastern Mississippi. Crews were already restoring electricity early Wednesday.

Governors in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana all declared states of emergency to better mobilize state resources and National Guard troops for the storm.

Florence is first major hurricane of 2018 season

Sun Sentinel

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Just hours after Tropical Storm Gordon landed near the border of Alabama and Mississippi, the first major hurricane of the 2018 Atlantic hurricane season was born.

Hurricane Florence became a major storm when it reached Category 3 strength with maximum sustained winds of 120 mph, the National Hurricane Center said shortly after 8:30 a.m.

Florence remains in the open waters of the Atlantic Ocean, about 2,200 miles from South Florida and currently poses no threat to land.

Forecasters expect its strength to fluctuate in coming days.

"A gradual weakening trend is forecast to begin tonight and continue through Friday," Hurricane Specialist Dave Roberts wrote in a Wednesday morning advisory.

"After that time, Florence is forecast to strengthen through the weekend."

As far as its projected path, Florence is expected to remain far out over the ocean through early next week.

Pilot shortages leave tankers on runways during Calif. wildfires

The Sacramento (Calif.) Bee

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California's long and deadly wildfire season has worn down its firefighting pilots, causing the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to ground as many as six aircraft at a time because of staffing shortages.

Schedules obtained by The Sacramento Bee show a rising number of grounded aircraft as the summer fire season progressed because pilots were unavailable to fly the planes.

The shortage is particularly acute among low-flying S-2T tankers. An average of four of the state's 23 tankers were grounded on certain days in August because they lacked pilots.

It left a critical firefighting component — a rapid response team to attack fires soon after they ignite — significantly weakened as California battled its worst wildfires this season.

Cal Fire leaders said they can't remember having so many aircraft grounded during peak fire months because of staffing shortages. They credited as private companies and federal

aircraft to fill in during an emergency, but they acknowledge that the department's pilot shortfall is straining the fleet.

"We are doing our best to consider the mission of the department in this as well as the needs of our pilots," said Cal Fire Chief of Flight Operations Dennis Brown.

His plans have been hampered by intense July fires that kept pilots working nonstop, retirements, long-term medical absences, private companies poaching their experienced pilots, an unexpected death and a cluster of job candidates who opted not to become tanker pilots after completing training, he said. Within the last year they lost 10 air tanker pilots to those issues.

"They would have had to have a crystal ball to predict this," said Jim Barnes, a longtime tanker pilot who recently retired.

Several current and former firefighting pilots in California declined to be interviewed on the record for this story, citing Cal Fire's ability to take away their authorization to fly tankers.

The staffing issue is going to take a while to address. In order

to cover current shortfalls, fix the daunting schedule Brown admits is having adverse effects on their pilots and staff new planes coming in, Brown estimates they'll need about 40 more pilots in the next few years. Eight people are currently in training to become air tanker pilots, but Brown said historically less than half of trainees actually decide to become air tanker pilots with Cal Fire.

"The training is much more vigorous than it used to be, but that's a good thing," Barnes said. "They've come forward light years on that issue."

Meanwhile, Cal Fire is preparing to reconfigure its fleet to reflect the realities of the state's recent year-round fire seasons.

Today, it mostly flies aircraft built in the 1970s and '80s, and its schedules are built on what officials now say is an outdated assumption that firefighters will get a few months of rest every winter.

"We used to have winter maintenance. There is no more winter maintenance," Brown said.

As a result, the state is adding new Black Hawk helicopters at a cost of \$24 million apiece and tak-



MARCUS YAM, LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

Firefighters watch as air tankers drop fire retardant ahead of the River Fire in Lakeport, Calif., on Aug. 1.

ing on seven retrofitted Air Force C-130 planes as new tankers. Each of the new aircraft represents millions of dollars in investment — and the need for more pilots.

The department is rethinking a demanding schedule that has pilots working six days on before getting a day off. That schedule made sense when a pilot could take off on a beach vacation for around half the year, but Cal Fire can't make that promise anymore.

"To stay competitive and also as a matter of safety, we can't work these people year-round at these rates," Brown said.

Cal Fire and DynCorp, the private company that flies and maintains the state's firefighting airplanes, are now struggling to fill just three slots for tanker pilots that would let them keep all of the state's S-2T tankers up and running.

In many cases, they'll be competing with private companies that offer better pay and friendlier schedules.

"It's really hard to find specialized pilots to do the kind of work Cal Fire does," said Ed Hirivnak, a firefighter and search-and-rescue pilot in Washington state.

NATION

Retired Sen. Kyl to fill McCain seat

Associated Press

PHOENIX — A former U.S. senator from Arizona who is now a lobbyist helping guide the confirmation of U.S. Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh was named Tuesday to temporarily fill the Senate seat left open by the death of John McCain.

Republican John Kyl cited his sense of duty in accepting the appointment but said he's only committing to serve until the end of the congressional session next Jan. 3.

Despite the short window, Kyl will likely be able to vote for Kavanaugh as the Supreme Court nominee.

Kyl, 76, retired from the Senate after three terms in 2013 and became a lobbyist. He said he had wanted to spend more time with his family in Arizona but will reluctantly return to Washington to help finish the nation's business, including confirming the president's judicial nominees.

"I'm putting my country first, just as this seat's previous occupant did every single day for more than 30 years," Kyl said of McCain.

Kyl, an attorney, was appointed by Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey, a fellow Republican who called him the best person for the job "regardless of politics" and said

he hopes Kyl stays in the post longer.

President Donald Trump tweeted: "Jon Kyl will be an extraordinary senator representing an extraordinary state, Arizona. I look forward to working with him."

Kyl was a reliable Republican vote during his time in the Senate — in contrast to McCain's occasional defiance of party leaders — and his arrival will be welcome to a GOP that has struggled with a narrow, single-vote majority while McCain was treated for the brain cancer that killed him on Aug. 25.

Voters will decide who they want in the seat in 2020 when they elect someone to serve the rest of McCain's term. The seat will come up again for a six-year term in 2022. If Kyl does leave the Senate in January, Ducey can appoint another person for the remaining year.

In the coming months, Kyl will have the opportunity to vote on several issues that have been involved in his lobbying activities. He has lobbied on behalf of young immigrants brought to the U.S. illegally as children, often called Dreamers, whose fate is in limbo after Trump tried to end an Obama-era program protecting them from deportation and Congress deadlocked on a solu-



Former Sen. Jon Kyl, R-Ariz., right, answers a question after Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey, left, announced he's appointing Kyl to fill the late John McCain's seat in the U.S. Senate on Tuesday in Phoenix.

tion. Kyl will likely also vote on bills containing tens of billions of dollars for Defense Department programs after he represented Northrop Grumman.

Kyl is well-respected in Arizona and has been able to avoid many of the battles with activists that complicated McCain's career and that of the state's other senator, Jeff Flake, who is retiring because his feud with Trump made his re-election impossible.

The unusual timing of Kyl's appointment could work out for another Arizona Republican who wants to become a U.S. senator — Rep. Martha McSally. She's currently locked in a tough campaign against Democratic Rep. Kyrsten Sinema for the seat Flake is vacating. Should she lose, McSally — a former Air Force colonel who once worked on Kyl's staff — could be appointed to the McCain seat if Kyl leaves it in January.

Kardashian back in DC to reform sentencing

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Reality television star Kim Kardashian West, who successfully pushed President Donald Trump to grant a pardon for a drug offender earlier this year, returned to the White House on Wednesday for a meeting with senior aides as part of the administration's efforts on criminal justice reform.

Kardashian participated in a listening session on clemency and prison reform with several staffers, including the president's senior adviser and son-in-law, Jared Kushner.

"The discussion is mainly focused on ways to improve that process to ensure deserving cases receive a fair review," according to Hogan Gidley, White House deputy press secretary.

Among the others in attendance were CNN commentator Van Jones; Shon Hopwood, a lawyer who served time in prison for bank robbery; and Leonard Leo, of the Federalist Society, who has been instrumental in steering Trump's Supreme Court picks, including Brett Kavanaugh, whose confirmation hearings have begun on Capitol Hill.

But the headlines were Kardashian, who last visited the White House three months ago to press for a pardon for Alice Marie Johnson, 63.

One week after Kardashian's visit, Trump granted Johnson clemency, freeing her from prison after a more-than-two-decade stint on drug charges.

"When I looked at Alice, I said we can't just stop with one person. We have to change the laws," Kardashian said in a statement released by #cut50, a group that looks to reduce incarceration time.

Kardashian gave an interview this week in which she said she would lobby for Chris Young, who was charged in December 2010 with being involved in drug trafficking in Clarksville, Tenn. He was later convicted and, due to mandatory minimum sentencing, was given life in prison without parole after being arrested for marijuana and cocaine possession.

Kushner has added prison reform to his broad portfolio, though others in the administration support the toughest possible sentences for drug and other convictions.

Facebook, Twitter defend anti-meddling efforts

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Facebook and Twitter executives pledged on Wednesday to better protect their social media platforms in the 2018 elections and beyond, and told Congress of aggressive efforts to root out foreign intrusions aimed at sowing divisions in American democracy.

Facebook's No. 2 executive, Sheryl Sandberg, and Twitter's CEO, Jack Dorsey, testified before the Senate Intelligence committee, but there was an empty chair for Google's parent Alphabet, which refused to send its top executive.

Sensors had sharp words for Alphabet CEO Larry Page, who oversees Google. Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., suggested the company might have bailed because it was "arrogant" while Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, expressed outrage over the absence.

Sandberg's appearance came several months after Facebook



Facebook Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg testifies before the Senate Intelligence Committee on Wednesday.

CEO Mark Zuckerberg testified in highly publicized Capitol Hill hearings. Like Zuckerberg, she acknowledged Facebook's lag in recognizing Russian efforts to manipulate Facebook during and after the 2016 U.S. presidential

election. Sandberg detailed the company's efforts to fight the problem with new technologies and manpower.

"We are even more determined than our adversaries, and we will continue to fight back," Sandberg said.

Holding his phone at the witness table, Dorsey tweeted some of his opening statement: "We aren't proud of how that free and open exchange has been weaponized and used to distract and divide people, and our nation. We found ourselves unprepared and ill-equipped for the immensity of the problems we've acknowledged," Dorsey wrote.

He added: "Abuse, harassment, troll armies, propaganda through bots and human coordination, misinformation campaigns, and divisive filter bubbles — that's not a healthy public square. Worse, a relatively small number of bad-faith actors were able to game Twitter to have an outsized impact."

Dorsey was headed later Wednesday to a House committee focused on GOP complaints that social media companies have shown evidence of bias against conservatives. In testimony released before that hearing, Dorsey denied that Twitter uses political ideology to make decisions.

Sandberg, 49, has extensive Washington experience, typically acts as the company's public face and clearly felt comfortable answering to the senators. In contrast, the bearded and tieless Dorsey, 41, was quiet but respectful in his answers. Both contrasted with Zuckerberg's sometimes awkward defiance at the April hearings as he fielded questions from skeptical lawmakers.

Facebook and Twitter are using increasingly sophisticated technology and artificial intelligence to combat misuse. But their approaches are different because their platforms are also different, as are their resources, in which Twitter is far behind.

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NATION

White House pushes back on claims in tell-all book

By ZEKE MILLER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An incendiary tell-all book by a reporter who helped bring down President Richard Nixon set off a firestorm in the White House, with its descriptions of current and former aides calling President Donald Trump an “idiot” and a “liar,” disparaging his judgment and claiming they plucked papers off his desk to prevent him from withdrawing from a pair of trade agreements.

The book by Washington Post journalist Bob Woodward is the latest to throw the Trump administration into damage-control mode with explosive anecdotes and concerns about the commander in chief. The Associated Press obtained a copy of “Fear: Trump in the White House” on Tuesday, a week before its official release.

Trump decried the quotes and stories in the book on Twitter as “frauds, a con on the public,” adding that Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and chief of staff John Kelly had denied uttering quoted criticisms of the president in the book.

And he denied accounts in the book that senior aides snatched sensitive documents off his desk to keep him from making impulsive decisions. He said in an interview with The Daily Caller, “There was nobody taking anything from me.”

Later Tuesday, Trump was back on Twitter denying the book’s claim that he had called Attorney General Jeff Sessions “mentally retarded” and “a dumb southerner.”

The publication of Woodward’s book has been anticipated for weeks, and current and former White House officials estimate that nearly all their colleagues cooperated with the famed Watergate journalist. The White House, in a statement from press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders, dismissed the book as “nothing more than fabricated stories, many by former disgruntled employees, told to make the President look bad.”

Woodward did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Mattis said in a statement, “The contemptuous words about the President attributed to me in Woodward’s book were never uttered by me or in my presence.”

A Pentagon spokesman, Col. Rob Manning, said Mattis was never interviewed by Woodward.

Trump did not speak to Woodward until after the book’s manuscript was completed. The Post released audio of Trump expressing surprise about the book in an August conversation with Woodward and dismay that he did not have an opportunity to contribute. Woodward tells Trump he had contacted multiple officials to attempt to interview Trump and was rebuffed.



Bob Woodward speaks during an event to commemorate the 40th anniversary of Watergate in Washington in 2012.
ALEX BRANDON/AP

New Woodward book paints picture of unhinged Trump

By DENIS SLATTERY
New York Daily News

President Donald Trump’s top aides believe he’s an “idiot” with the understanding of a “fifth- or sixth-grader” and have gone to great lengths to avert disaster as they struggle with the commander in chief’s impulsive and dangerous personality, according to a new book by legendary journalist Bob Woodward.

The veteran Washington Post journalist paints a damning portrait of a West Wing dominated by a man whose closest advisers go out of their way to circumvent the commander in chief — going so far as to ignore orders, hide information and even swipe papers from his desk.

White House chief of staff John Kelly called Trump “unhinged” and an “idiot,” according to Woodward. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis describes the president as having the understanding of “a fifth- or sixth-grader.”

Trump’s former personal lawyer John Dowd describes the President as “a f---ing liar,” telling Trump he would end up in an “orange jump suit” if he testified to special counsel Robert Mueller. “To be an idiot. It’s pointless to try to convince him of anything. He’s gone off the rails. We’re in crazy-town,” Kelly is quoted as saying at a staff meeting. “I don’t even know why any of us are here. This is the worst job I’ve ever had.”

Following a chemical weapons attack on Syrian civilians in April 2017, Trump reportedly told military brass he wanted to assassinate Syrian President Bashar Assad.

“Let’s f---ing kill him! Let’s go in. Kill the f---ing lot of them,” Trump told Mattis.

Mattis responded by telling the president he would begin work-



ing on plans, but then hung up the phone and told an aide, “We’re not going to do any of that. We’re going to be much more measured,” according to Woodward.

Woodward, 75, offers an unprecedented look at the inner workings of the Trump administration and top officials’ efforts to deal with a president who has little understanding of world affairs or how government works in the 448-page book, “Fear: Trump in the White House,” which is due out next week and was obtained Tuesday by The Washington Post.

Woodward, a Pulitzer prize-winning journalist known for his reporting on the Nixon-era Watergate scandal, bases his account of the current administration on “hundreds of hours of interviews with firsthand sources, meeting notes, personal diaries, files and documents.”

The book describes “an administrative coup d’etat” and a “nervous breakdown” within the executive branch, as senior aides sought to keep information from the president.

Gary Cohn, Trump’s former top economic adviser, twice removed papers from the president’s desk to prevent him from signing documents that would have led to the U.S. withdrawing from trade deals, including a notification letter pulling out of the North American Free Trade Agreement, Woodward writes.

“I can stop this. I’ll just take the paper off his desk,” Cohn told former staff secretary Rob Porter.

Trump, who has made no attempt to hide his feelings about Mueller’s Russia investigation, has also struggled privately with the investigation, according to Woodward.

Dowd was convinced that Trump would commit perjury if he talked to the special counsel and staged a practice session to make his point.

Woodward writes that Dowd saw the “full nightmare” of a potential Mueller interview, and felt Trump acted like an “aggrieved Shakespearean king.”

Trump was surprised. “You think I was struggling?” he asked.

The book goes on to describe Trump’s paranoia about the Russia probe as all-consuming, with the president telling aides that “everybody’s trying to get me,” following Mueller’s appointment, according to the tome.

Woodward writes that Trump often explodes on top aides and erupts in bursts of profanity when talking about people he is displeased with.

Former chief of staff Reince Priebus was described by the president as being “like a little rat. He just scurries around.”

Woodward’s work will be the latest in a string of books that have offered often damning insight into the inner workings of the Trump White House.

Southern senators defend Sessions

By GABRIEL POGRUND
The Washington Post

Southern Republican senators defended Jeff Sessions after an explosive new book by Bob Woodward recounted how President Donald Trump called his attorney general a “dumb Southerner” and mocked his accent.

In the forthcoming chronicle of Trump’s White House, “Fear,” Woodward writes that the president privately called Sessions a “traitor,” saying: “This guy is mentally retarded. He’s this dumb Southerner ... He couldn’t even be a one-person country lawyer down in Alabama.”

The remarks are said to have come during a conversation between Trump and his former staff secretary, Rob Porter, about Sessions’ decision to recuse himself from the Russian investigation. They represent the most withering insults the president has directed at his attorney general in months of largely one-sided sniping.

In a message on Twitter on Tuesday night, Trump denied making the remarks.

“The already discredited Woodward book, so many lies and phony sources, has me calling Jeff Sessions ‘mentally retarded’ and ‘a dumb southerner.’ I said NEITHER, never used those terms on anyone, including Jeff, and being a southerner is a GREAT thing. He made this up to divide!” the president said.

“I’m a Southerner, people can judge my intellect, my IQ, by my product and what I produce rather than what somebody else says,” Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., said in an interview.

“We’re a pretty smart bunch. We lost the Civil War, but I think we’re winning the economic war since then ... I’m not gonna get into name calling because I don’t think you should be allowed to call names — including the president,” he added.

Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala., who served alongside Sessions during his 20 years as senator for Alabama, said, “Well, I’m sure I’ve got that accent, wouldn’t you think?”

He pointed out that Trump himself relied on Southern voters during the 2016 general election, warning, “I guess the president, he says what he thinks ... I think the president’s probably got a lot of respect for the South, I hope so. He did well there. Without the South he wouldn’t be the president of the United States.”

The vast majority of Southern states voted for Trump.

Asked what he thought of Trump’s claim that Sessions was “mentally retarded,” Shelby, the fifth most senior Republican senator, added: “I think that’s strong words. I think Sessions is a very smart man and a man of integrity. I would disagree with the president on that.”

NATION

Liberal upstart stuns in bid for Mass. House seat

By BOB SALSBERG
AND STEVE LEIBMAN
Associated Press

BOSTON — In a political stunt, incumbent Democratic U.S. Rep. Michael Capuano lost Tuesday's primary to Ayanna Pressley, a Boston city councilor who is virtually assured of becoming the first black woman to serve Massachusetts in Congress.

The 44-year-old upset over a 10-term incumbent congressman underscores the shift underway in a Democratic Party whose base is seeking younger, more diverse candidates who embrace liberal policies. Her victory comes just two months after Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez similarly defeated a top House leader in a primary for a New York congressional seat.

Ocasio-Cortez on Tuesday night tweeted a selfie of both women together and wrote: "In June, I won my primary. Tonight, she won hers. Here's to November."

Pressley, the first black woman to serve on the council, is now on track to represent all of Massachusetts once served by Democratic icons Tip O'Neill and John F. Kennedy.

"Change is coming and the future belongs to all of us," Pressley told wildly cheering supporters Tuesday night.

A subdued Capuano told supporters he did everything he could to win re-election.

"Apparently, the district just is

very upset with lots of things that are going on. I don't blame them. I'm just as upset as they are, but so be it. This is the way life goes," he said.

The race between Capuano and Pressley was perhaps the most closely watched contest in Massachusetts, especially since Pressley drew comparisons to Ocasio-Cortez.

The 7th Congressional District is the only one in the state where minorities comprise a majority of the population.

Capuano is considered one of the most liberal members of the Massachusetts delegation, and Pressley had acknowledged she had won major policy questions with him. There is no Republican on the November ballot in the district, meaning Pressley is virtually assured of entering Congress in January.

Massachusetts' last Democratic primary upset came in 2014, when Seth Moulton defeated Rep. John Tierney in the state's 6th Congressional District.

Democratic U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren sailed through her primary unopposed. She'll face Geoff Diehl, a state representative who served as co-chairman of President Donald Trump's 2016 campaign in the state and defeated two other Republicans for his party's nomination.

Diehl has tried to turn Warren's national profile against her, criti-



STEVEN SENNE/AP

Boston City Councilor Ayanna Pressley celebrates her victory Tuesday over U.S. Rep. Michael Capuano, D-Mass., in the 7th Congressional House Democratic primary.

cizing her for being too politically extreme and spending too much time preparing for a possible presidential run in 2020.

Warren has said she's not running for president.

Warren, 69, routinely spars with Trump on Twitter. She's also a standard-bearer in the resistance to the Republican administration and recently released 10 years of tax returns. Trump has refused to release his tax returns.

Another veteran congressman, Democratic Rep. Richard Neal, won a spirited primary showdown with Tahirah Amatul-Wadud, a black attorney from Springfield who had hoped to become the first Muslim to serve in Congress from Massachusetts. Neal, the dean of the state's House delegation, first was elected in 1989.

Two other Democratic House

incumbents, William Keating and Joe Kennedy, fended off primary challenges on Tuesday. Kennedy, the grandson of the late U.S. Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, delivered the Democratic response to Trump's State of the Union address earlier this year.

Another Democrat, U.S. Rep. Niki Tsongas, is retiring at the end of this term, and that open seat touched off a political scramble with 10 candidates on the Democratic primary ballot.

Republican Gov. Charlie Baker won his party's nomination for a second term, defeating Scott Lively, a conservative minister and staunch supporter of Trump who frequently called Baker — a frequent critic of the president — a RINO, or Republican in Name

Only. Baker will face Democrat Jay Gonzalez in November.

Baker, a moderate who has been popular with voters in what is perceived as one of the nation's bluest states, will face Gonzalez, who served as secretary of administration and finance under Democratic Gov. Deval Patrick.

Neither Gonzales nor his primary opponent, Democrat Robert Massie, a longtime political and environmental activist, was well-known outside party activist circles. Both contended that Baker's support among voters was soft and that his administration had failed to make significant strides in many areas, particularly the problems plaguing the Boston-area transit system known as the "T."

Pressley win is latest show of voters' desire for fresh voices

Associated Press

BOSTON — Ayanna Pressley is all but assured of becoming the first black woman elected to Congress from Massachusetts, the latest example of the Democratic Party's embrace of diversity and liberal politics as the recipe for success in the Trump era.

The 44-year-old's upset victory against longtime Democratic Rep. Michael Capuano comes at the tail end of a primary season in which black politicians have made a series of advances.

In nearby Connecticut, Jahana Hayes is on track to become that state's first black woman to win a congressional seat if she prevails in November. And black politicians in three states — Florida, Georgia and Maryland — have won the Democratic nomination for governor, a historic turn for a country that has elected just two black governors in U.S. history.

For Pressley, as with many other ascendancy candidates of color, unabashedly liberal credentials smoothed her path to victory in the primary.

She was endorsed by fellow congressional upstart Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who knocked off veteran Rep. Joe Crowley, of New York, in June. Pressley backs Medicare-for-all, the single-payer health care proposal, which helped her garner backing from Our Revolution, the offshoot of Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders' 2016 presidential campaign.

Pressley called for defunding the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, known as ICE, which helped her draw support from Massachusetts' popular attorney general, Maura Healey, who's gained a national following for repeatedly suing President Donald Trump in an attempt to block his policies on immigration, gun control and other issues.

Pressley tapped into growing cries within the Democratic Party for newer, more diverse leadership. She and Ocasio-Cortez both defeated older, white congressmen who were reliable liberal votes but who didn't look like many voters in their districts.



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NATION

Homeless man's lawyer: \$400K in donations gone

Associated Press

MOUNT HOLLY, N.J. — The lawyer for a homeless man in Philadelphia whose selflessness led to donations of more than \$400,000 through an online fundraising page said Tuesday that all the money is gone.

Johnny Bobbitt's attorney, Chris Fallon, said he learned to his surprise that the cash was gone during a call with lawyers for Kate McClure and Mark D'Amico.

"Shocked. Shocked," Fallon said when he heard. "They raised this money to help Johnny Bobbitt get money for food."

McClure and D'Amico are the couple accused in a lawsuit brought by Bobbitt of mismanaging donations raised for him through GoFundMe. The couple deny the claims in the suit, saying they're wary of giving Bobbitt large sums because they fear he will buy drugs.

During an appearance Monday on NBC's "Megyn Kelly Today"

show, D'Amico told Kelly there was well over \$150,000 left of the donations.

GoFundMe spokesman Bobby Whithorne said the company is working with law enforcement to ensure that Johnny Bobbitt gets all the money raised for him after he used his last \$20 to help a woman get gas.

"While we assist law enforcement with their ongoing investigation, GoFundMe is also working with Johnny's legal team to ensure he's receiving support while the remaining funds are being recovered," Whithorne said in a statement.

He also said the company gave \$20,000 to an account set up by Bobbitt's attorney "to provide assistance" to him during the investigation.

McClure and D'Amico's attorney, Ernest Badway, told The Associated Press they have no comment.

The story has gained international attention. McClure set the page up to

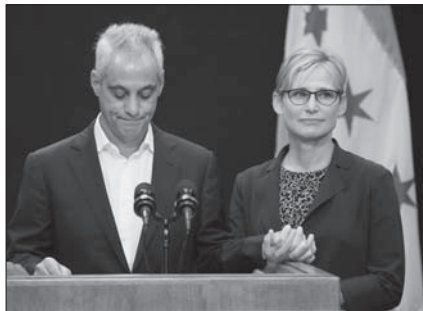
give back to Bobbitt, a Marine veteran who helped her when she ran out of gas on an Interstate 95 exit ramp late one night. It raised more than \$400,000 from more than 14,000 people.

Bobbitt walked a few blocks to buy McClure gas. She didn't have money to repay him at the time, but sought him out days later to give him the money, and visited him a few more times to take him food and water. They later appeared on shows such as "Good Morning America" and were interviewed by the BBC.

McClure and D'Amico have repeatedly denied any wrongdoing or misusing any of the money.

The New Jersey judge in the case ordered the couple to transfer the money into an escrow account by Friday and hire an accountant to review financial records within 10 days.

The money will be transferred to an account controlled by Bobbitt's lawyers but can't be used until the judge determines how it will be managed.



STACEY WESCOTT, CHICAGO TRIBUNE/AP

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, with his wife, Amy Rule, by his side, announced Tuesday he will not seek a third term in office.

Chicago mayor won't seek a third term

BY DON BABWIN
AND MICHAEL TARM
Associated Press

CHICAGO — Rahm Emanuel, whose tumultuous tenure as Chicago mayor included an infamous police shooting and a surge in violent crime, said in a surprise announcement Tuesday that he would abandon his plan to seek a third term next year but gave no reason for the sudden change of heart.

Emanuel also led the effort to conduct the largest mass closing of neighborhood schools in American history and is credited with helping to stabilize the city's finances through politically unpopular increases in taxes and fees.

The 58-year-old former White House chief of staff known for his pugnaous political style said only that he and his wife "look forward to writing that next chapter in our journey together."

"This has been the job of a lifetime, but it is not a job for a lifetime," the mayor said, reading prepared remarks at a news conference where he was joined at the podium by his wife, Amy Rule. He held her hand throughout the announcement.

Before becoming mayor in 2011, Emanuel was a Democratic congressman and chief of staff to President Barack Obama. In winning the city's top office, he succeeded Richard M. Daley, who was mayor for more than 20 years, and won a second term in 2015.

Emanuel had been running and raising money for months in preparation for the February election. The Chicago Tribune said he had already amassed more than \$10 million to campaign for another four-year term.

His announcement came the day before the start of jury selection for one of the biggest police shooting trials in Chicago history, a case that seemed sure to renew questions about the city's long effort to prevent the release of video showing white officer Jason Van Dyke shooting black teenager Laquan McDonald 16 times in 2014.

Many people asked whether Emanuel's office delayed releasing the video to lessen the political damage.

"Imagine this trial is starting and what happened is going to get reshaped over and over and over again while you are in campaign mode," said Delmarie Cobb, a media and political consultant and a vocal critic of the mayor.

David Axelrod, a friend of Emanuel's who worked with him in Obama's White House, disagreed. He said Emanuel told him of his decision not to run over the weekend.

"I think he was aware of the timing of the trial, and he was also aware of what he did and didn't do. And I think he was comfortable about that," Axelrod said. "His concerns ... were about his own level of energy and freshness."

Rahm Emanuel
mayor of Chicago

No matter how the trial ends, Emanuel's legacy as mayor will likely be tied to the case. The release of the video led to a Department of Justice investigation of Chicago police, culminating in a damning report last year that found widespread civil rights violations.

There are now no front-runners in the mayoral race, and Emanuel's departure will almost certainly encourage others to enter it. The 12 candidates declared to date include a former Chicago police superintendent, Garry McCarthy; a former Chicago public schools CEO, Paul Villas; and Cook County Circuit Court Clerk Dorothy Brown. They were all considered longshots.

The mayor several times referred to his family Tuesday, noting that his three kids are now in college. But he stopped short of saying family considerations drove his decision.

Bishop reckoning with his own role in protecting abusive priests

BY MICHAEL RUBINKAM
Associated Press

A Roman Catholic bishop who apologized to his flock last month for the "misguided and inappropriate decisions of church leaders" is reckoning with his own role — revealed in federal court a decade ago — in the system that protected pedophile priests.

Scranton Bishop Joseph Bambera handled three sexual misconduct cases during his three-year tenure as diocesan vicar for clergy. He testified about one of them in a 2007 civil trial over clergy abuse.

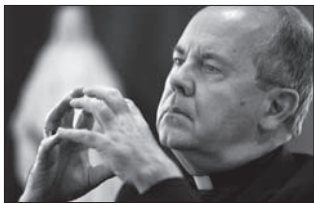
Under questioning from a plaintiff's lawyer, Bambera acknowledged the diocese ignored its own policy by failing to report "Father Ned" — a pseudonym used in court — to civil authorities. He testified that Father Ned was removed from ministry only temporarily before getting another parish assignment. Once there, Bambera told the jury, Father Ned was caught "grooming" a boy for sexual assault.

The Associated Press has learned that Father Ned's real name is the Rev. Robert Gibson, who died in 2012. Gibson is one of about 300 predator priests named in a landmark Pennsylvania grand jury report that said more than 1,000 children in six Catholic dioceses have been abused since the 1940s.

Bambera's participation in the Gibson case highlights the fact that some of today's bishops, while they were rising through the ranks, helped their superiors shield priests accused of abuse from law enforcement and allowed them to continue in ministry — or at least had knowledge of the cover-up by senior church officials and didn't blow the whistle.

"He knew. He was part of the system," said Harci Hamilton, a University of Pennsylvania legal expert on child sexual abuse and the founder of CHLD USA, an advocacy group.

Bambera, who has emphasized his zero tolerance policies toward clergy abuse since becoming Scranton's bishop in 2010, said Bishop James Timlin had already decided to reassign Gibson to another parish by the time Bambera became vicar in 1995. He said he worked to make sure Gibson and other



BUTCH COMEDYS, THE (SCRANTON, PA.) TIMES-TRIBUNE/AP

Joseph Bambera, Roman Catholic bishop of Scranton, Pa., discusses the clergy abuse crisis in an interview with The Times-Tribune in August.

priests accused of abuse were eventually barred from ministry.

"Could I have done things better? Do I wish that there were things that were different in those days? Yeah, I do, I do," Bambera told the AP. "I wish that law enforcement was engaged on a much, much more regular basis than it had been." But he said there was only so much he could do. "I worked for Bishop Timlin and the decisions were his to make; they weren't mine," he said.

On Friday, Bambera barred Timlin from representing the diocese in public, citing his failure to protect children from abusive priests. Bambera said in a statement announcing Timlin's punishment that the grand jury report had also "caused me to reflect on my own role in handling allegations of abuse in the church" and "to consider my role and past actions in protecting children."

Bambera told the AP that while he didn't do the job perfectly, he did what he could to remove abusive priests, and "I clearly did raise my voice and my concern on many occasions about behavior and decisions that I didn't agree with."

NATION

Jet carrying sick passengers lands at JFK

By ESHA RAY, THOMAS TRACY
AND GRAHAM RAYMAN
New York Daily News

NEW YORK — A jet from Dubai loaded with sick passengers landed at Kennedy Airport as emergency crews rushed to the scene early Wednesday and the plane was quarantined, sources said.

Emirates Flight 203, containing 500 passengers in all, landed just before 9:30 a.m. local time. Sources said 10 people — seven crewmembers and three passengers — were taken to Jamaica Hospital with flu-like symptoms.

Another 90 people who might also have taken ill were evaluated on the plane.

"All we have been told is that some passengers have fallen ill and we should remain in our seats," passenger Larry Cohen posted to Twitter. Cohen shared images of ambulances and police vehicles arriving outside the plane and the crew leaving the plane while passengers waited in their seats.

FDNY EMS crews, the Port Authority Police and officials from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention responded to the scene. The Airbus A380 was

moved to an area away from a terminal and quarantined, while an investigation continues into what caused the flu-like symptoms — coughing, fever, nausea — and how it spread so fast.

"CDC is aware of an Emirates flight arriving at JFK this morning with some passengers who are reporting an unspecified illness," a CDC spokesman said. "CDC is working with local authorities to investigate and will provide additional information when it is available."

The CDC said the plane stopped in Saudi Arabia after departing from Dubai.



A passenger gets her temperature taken Wednesday as she leaves an Emirates airplane at New York's Kennedy Airport.

LARRY COHEN/AP



Joe C. Hone/AP

Danny, a 60-year-old homeless man who gave only his first name, lies on an overpass above the 101 Freeway, one of the nation's busiest freeways, in Los Angeles in September 2017.

Court rules cities can't prosecute people for sleeping on the streets

By REBECCA BOONE

Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — Cities can't prosecute people for sleeping on the streets if they have nowhere else to go because it amounts to cruel and unusual punishment, which is unconstitutional, a federal appeals court said Tuesday.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals sided with six homeless people from Boise who sued the city in 2009 over a local ordinance that banned sleeping in public spaces. The ruling could affect several other cities across the U.S. West that have similar laws.

It comes as many places across the West Coast are struggling with homelessness brought on by rising housing costs and income inequality.

When the Boise lawsuit was filed, attorneys for the homeless residents said as many as 4,500 people didn't have a place to sleep in Idaho's capital city and homeless shelters had only about 700 available beds or mats. The case bounced back and forth in the

courts for years, and Boise modified its rules in 2014 to say homeless people couldn't be prosecuted for sleeping outside when shelters were full.

But that didn't solve the problem, the attorneys said, because Boise's shelters limit the number of days that homeless residents can stay. Two of the city's three shelters also require some form of religious participation for some programs, making those shelters unsuitable for people with different beliefs, the homeless residents said.

The three-judge panel for the 9th Circuit found that the shelter rules meant homeless people would still be at risk of prosecution even on days when beds were open. The judges also said the religious programming woven into some shelter programs was a problem.

"A city cannot, via the threat of prosecution, coerce an individual to attend religion-based treatment programs consistently with the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment," Judge Mar-

sha Berzon wrote.

The biggest issue was that the city's rule violated the U.S. Constitution's Eighth Amendment against cruel and unusual punishment, the court found. The amendment limits what the government can criminalize, it said.

"As a result, just as the state may not criminalize the state of being 'homeless in public places,' the state may not 'criminalize conduct that is an unavoidable consequence of being homeless — namely sitting, lying, or sleeping on the streets,'" Berzon wrote.

The ruling shows it's time for Boise officials to start proposing "real solutions," said Maria Foscarinis, executive director of the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, whose attorneys were among those representing the homeless residents.

"Criminally punishing homeless people for sleeping on the street when they have nowhere else to go is inhumane, and we applaud the court for holding that it is also unconstitutional," Foscarinis said in a statement.

Hard liquor banned for most fraternities

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — A ban intending to clamp down on hard liquor at frat house parties following pledge deaths last year has been ordered for most fraternities in the United States and Canada unless the drinks are served by someone with a liquor license.

All international and national fraternities of the North-American Interfraternity Conference have a year to prohibit drinks with an alcohol content of 15 percent or more from fraternity chapters and events unless it is served by licensed third-party vendors, the group said Tuesday.

The rule was adopted Aug. 27 in a "near-unanimous vote" and must be implemented by Sept. 1, 2019, conference spokeswoman Heather Kirk said in an emailed news release. The group has more than 6,100 chapters on 800 campuses.

Authorities say fraternity pledges suffered alcohol-related deaths at Louisiana State University and Penn State University last year.

Alcohol abuse and "its serious consequences endanger" fraternities' core values of brotherhood, personal development and providing a community of support, said Judson Horras, president and CEO of the Carmel, Ind.-based conference.

"This action shows fraternities' clear commitment and leadership to further their focus on the safety of members and all in our communities," Horras said.

The Interfraternity Council at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind., voted in February 2015 to ban hard liquor from fraternity properties and all chapter events.

The NIC said the new rule follows the adoption of other alcohol-related initiatives in the past year.

Prison fire crews reviewed after inmate accused of rape

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Idaho is reviewing its program for temporarily releasing prison inmates to help fight wildfires after an inmate was charged with raping a woman working at a remote Utah firefighting base camp.

Idaho prison officials are working with the state's lands department as they scrutinize which inmates are allowed to serve, the training they receive and how they are deployed, said Idaho Department of Correction spokesman Jeff Ray. Five crews of Idaho inmates were returned to prison after the charge was filed last week.

Most states in the U.S. West have similar programs allowing low-level offenders to be temporarily released to help firefighting efforts. In California, hundreds of minimum-security inmates fought on the front lines

of the state's largest-ever blaze this year.

Idaho inmate Ruben Hernandez, 27, was set to make his first court appearance Wednesday on a felony rape charge alleging he assaulted the woman after she rejected his advances Aug. 29.

He was part of a 10-person crew that cooked and did janitorial work. They were supervised by two Idaho correctional officers.

Inmates are typically allowed to move about fairly freely, said Sanpete County attorney Kevin Daniels. Hernandez does not have a history of assault or similar crimes, and was less than a year from a parole date on a drug charge.

No attorney was immediately listed for Hernandez in Utah court records, and a message left for one of his previous attorneys was not immediately returned. He is being held without bail in Utah.

NATION

Early results raise hopes for gene editing

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE
Associated Press

PHOENIX — Early, partial results from a historic gene-editing study give encouraging signs that the treatment may be safe and having at least some of its hoped-for effect, but it's too soon to know whether it ultimately will succeed.

The results announced Wednesday are from the first human test of gene editing in the body, an attempt to permanently change someone's DNA to cure a disease — in this case, a genetic disorder called Hunter syndrome that often kills people in their teens.

In two patients who got a medium dose of the treatment, urine levels of large sugar compounds that are hallmarks of Hunter syndrome had fallen by half, on average, four months later — a possible sign the treatment is working. Two others who got a low dose have seen little change in those sugars so far.

There's no way to know yet whether the change in the middle-dose patients is due to the gene editing or something else, but the fact their sugars have declined consistently since treatment suggests it might be.

"I cannot absolutely say it's a treatment effect" but the drop is "really encouraging," said the study leader, Dr. Joseph Muen-

zer, of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. The main goal of early treatment studies is to test safety, though researchers also look for hints that the therapy is working. Muenzer gave the results at a conference in Greece and consults for the treatment's maker, California-based Sangamo Therapeutics.

The company's president, Dr. Sandy Macrae, said tests in about five months will reveal more, but the change in the middle-dose group so far "looks really good."

"The most rational explanation for this is that what we hoped was going to happen has happened," he said.

Several independent experts agreed.

"The results are exciting" and suggest that the gene editing is working to some degree without safety concerns so far, said Dr. Howard Kaufman, a Boston scientist and member of a National Institutes of Health panel that reviewed the study before it began.

■ **How it works.** Gene editing is intended as the gene editing is to do gene therapy, to knock out a bad gene or supply a good one that's missing. Doctors hope it will give a way to address a host of diseases that can't be treated well now.

In November, a Phoenix-area man with Hunter syndrome, Brian Madeux, became the first



MATT YORK/AP

Brian Madeux prepares lunch at his home in New River, Ariz. Madeux was the first person in the world to participate in a gene-editing attempt in his body — for the inherited disease Hunter syndrome.

person to test this inside the body. He lacks a gene that makes an enzyme that breaks down certain large sugar compounds called GAGs. Those build up in cells and cause havoc throughout the body.

Through an IV, Madeux received many copies of a corrective gene and a gene-editing tool called zinc finger nucleases to help put it in a precise spot in his DNA. He was one of the two patients given a very low dose of the treatment because this first-in-human testing called for extreme caution.

■ **Early results.** In Madeux and the other low-dose patient, levels of the tell-tale sugar compounds in urine rose 9 percent on average after four months. Muenzer said it's hard to know whether that is a significant change; little is known about the biology of these compounds, including whether they fluctuate during the day or before or after meals.

A liver biopsy on one patient given a low dose of the therapy found no evidence that the gene editing had occurred, but Sangamo scientists said that dose is far below the level at which such signs had been detected in research on primates.

Two other patients were given a middle dose that was twice what the first two patients received. Their GAG levels declined by 51 percent after four months, on average. Two of the main types of these sugars that accumulate in tissues declined 32 percent and 61 percent, respectively.

It is not yet known if declines like these can improve patients' health or slow the progression of the disease.

■ **Next steps.** Two more patients have been given the highest dose being tested — 10 times the starting dose — for a total of six patients in the study. The next step is to start taking patients off

the weekly enzyme treatments they've been receiving to see if the gene therapy has changed their bodies so they make enough of the enzyme themselves.

More results are expected at a medical meeting in February.

"We need to see sustained levels for this to be practical. If this only works for six months, that's not very beneficial," Muenzer said. "Time's going to tell."

In an interview at his home in Arizona last month, Madeux, 45, told The Associated Press he volunteered for the study in hopes of being able to stop the weekly, three-hour enzyme infusions, but also to help find a treatment for future generations with the disease.

"I'm old and having Hunter's has done a lot of damage to my body," Madeux said. "I'm actually pretty lucky I've lived this long."

Penn State hazing victim's parents settle with fraternity

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — The parents of a Penn State University student who died after a night of hazing and drinking have settled with the national organization of the fraternity he was pledging, their lawyer said.

The amount for which Jim and Evelyn Piazza, the parents of the late Tim Piazza, 19, settled with Beta Theta Pi is undisclosed,

family attorney Thomas Kline said.

Beta Theta Pi has also agreed to a 17-point program that makes chapters safer and penalizes groups for hazing, he said, reforms that will "help establish a baseline for the new norm" of fraternity life.

Beta Theta Pi is focused on adopting "accountability measures," national leaders of the fraternity said.

Piazza, an engineering student from Lebanon, N.J., participated in a series of

drinking stations the night of Feb. 2, 2017, as well as a basement event involving rapid consumption of alcohol.

The house's elaborate video security system recorded him stumbling to a couch on the first floor before falling down the steps.

He was carried back upstairs, and spent the night in evident pain, most of it on the couch as fraternity brothers took ineffective and even harmful steps to address his condition.

After he was found unconscious in the basement the next morning, it took his friends about 40 minutes to summon an ambulance, and he later died at a hospital.

Medical experts say he suffered a fractured skull and shattered spleen, and his blood-alcohol level has been estimated to have peaked at three or four times the legal limit for driving.

A judge dismissed the most serious charges filed in Piazza's death.

Fla. teacher accused of being drunk in school faces firing

Sun Sentinel

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — A Broward County, Fla., teacher faces firing after school district officials say they caught him at work drunk and passed out.

Administrators at Everglades High in Miramar say a faculty member alerted them on Jan. 29 that math teacher Curtis Wiles,

40, appeared to be under the influence of alcohol.

Assistant Principal Anthony Smith went into Smith's Class about 8:20 a.m. to investigate.

"Smith observed through the glass opening of the classroom door that Wiles was reclined in his chair, with both feet on his desk and was asleep while students

were in his first-period class," a district report said.

Smith used his key to enter the classroom "and Wiles slowly opened his eyes and asked, 'Mr. Smith what can I help you with?'" the investigation said.

The administrator told Wiles he needed to check on a student's grades and attendance, but Wiles was unable to log into his grade-

book, despite three attempts, the report said.

Wiles was "very lethargic, had slurred speech, seemed confused and disoriented" and had an odor of alcohol," the report said, adding his eyes "were glassy and he appeared drowsy and was slow or had inappropriate reactions."

Two breathalyzer tests were

given that morning and Wiles tested at four times the legal limit, officials said.

The next day, school officials found a small bottle of vodka in a locked classroom closet.

School district policy forbids employees from being under the influence while at work or bringing alcohol onto a school campus.

NATION



Boys gather around a horse-drawn cart full of produce outside an arabber stable in Baltimore.



A boy belonging to an Old Order Mennonite family walks in a field at his family's farm in New Holland, Pa.



James Rich coaxes a horse into a trailer in New Holland, Pa., after it received a new set of horseshoes.

Cross-cultural bond

Ties between urban horsemen, Mennonites bolster old trade

By DAVID MCFADDEN
Associated Press

BALTIMORE — At an inner-city stable in one of the grittiest areas of Baltimore, a vanishing breed of urban horsemen prepares for its weekly visit to Pennsylvania Dutch country, where Mennonite farmers are helping to carry on a merchant tradition handed down through generations of black families.

On this recent morning, a few of the remaining practitioners of an obscure trade and folk culture known as arabbing are taking ponies to get shod in New Holland, Pa., where horse-drawn buggies clip-clop along rural blacktops and craftsmen still make wooden wagon wheels, carriages and leather harnesses.

It's an unlikely cross-cultural bond: a tight community of black horsemen in impoverished West Baltimore and rural Old Order Mennonites who shun most modern conveniences. Their worlds come together via a dependence on horses and a determination to live proudly on the margins of modern society.

"We rely on Mennonite know-how because we don't have the knowledge and the tools to do some of this stuff anymore. It's the way we found to keep this life going," said James "Fruit" Chase, the leader of a roughly 20-horse stable that's the strongest remnant of Baltimore's old arabbing tradition.

Selling fruit and vegetables from horse-drawn carts — which took root with black families in Baltimore after the Civil War — persists in this city not through nostalgia but through need. Baltimore's remaining arabbers — a name derived from an old term for peddlers of 19th-century London and pronounced AY-rabbers — work out of three licensed stables tucked away in areas where healthier food is scarce among corner markets and greasy take-out joints.

In recent decades, the street peddlers managed to forge a sustaining link with Pennsylvania's tradition-bound Mennonites — generally less austere cousins than the Amish.



PHOTOS BY PATRICK SEMANSKY/AP

A young boy pets a horse at an arabber stable in Baltimore in June. The city's remaining arabbers work out of three licensed stables tucked away in areas where healthful food is scarce.



James Chase, left, visits with children belonging to an Old Order Mennonite family inside a barn on their property in New Holland, Pa.

Daniel Van Allen, the head of Baltimore's Arabber Preservation Society, describes the little-known connection between the arabbers and Old Order Mennonites as "the meeting of two subcultures."

"They're not involved with the same big-budget, big-money

economy that the modern people are," said Van Allen, adding that Baltimore is the last U.S. city to have functional horse-cart vending.

Chase, a charismatic man with an easy smile, has developed warm friendships with conservative Mennonites, young and old.

What was once a culture clash for him has become a weekly visit full of common ground. Two Associated Press journalists accompanied Chase and two arabbing colleagues on a recent visit to an Old Order Mennonite family's 35-acre farm, where water is pumped by hand and Scripture verses are read by candlelight.

The West Baltimore horseman — in a camouflage cap, jeans and sneakers — presented a striking contrast with patriarch Leon Hoover's family. The bearded farmer and his four boys dressed alike in straw hats and pants hitched up by suspenders. His wife and eldest daughter wore long dresses and bonnets.

"You can't really go a lot of places and not see people arguing, fighting and fussing. But up here, it's like a piece of heaven," said Chase, relaxing on the porch of the Hoovers' rambling farmhouse after picking strawberries with the Mennonite youngsters he's introduced to his own.

Hoover, whose family has

farmed an electricity-free patch of New Holland for generations, said he valued Chase's friendship. His children break out into wide grins every time they see West Baltimore's arabbers coming.

"We trust James. We don't travel much and the children like to hear his stories from the city," Hoover said as he inspected tomato vines.

Pretty much every Monday, Chase also stops at a Mennonite auction that provides affordable horses, some for as little as \$700. Mennonite men outside the auction did the hard work of shoeing the arabbers' ponies and filing their back teeth on a blazingly hot afternoon.

Like many old traditions, arabbing has greatly diminished in Baltimore due to development and urban renewal. At one time, stables were scattered across the city. But by the 1960s, their number had decreased to 25. Arabbers were pushed further toward the margins when the city's wholesale produce markets closed.

Now, Chase is one of a dozen people who still tenaciously cling to the trade, loading up bounties of wholesalers' produce on canopied red-and-yellow painted carts pulled by horses with bells and feather plumes. Harnesses are embellished with heart-shaped brass rivets.

Faithful customers, often elderly people, emerge on blocks marred by boarded-up properties to buy from arabbers' carts. It's the only option many citizens in Baltimore's poorest areas have to purchase fresh food that doesn't involve a lengthy bus trip or two.

Baltimore's arabber clans say they've got no choice but to put in the hard hours to sustain the life they love. They are "horse crazy," they say, and are deeply proud of family legacies stretching back over a century in some cases.

The highlight of their week? Traveling to Pennsylvania Dutch country.

"I let my city stress fade up there until I cross that Maryland line again," said Chase, as the sun rose over the Fremont Street stable decorated with colorful murals honoring his family's arabbing heritage.

WORLD

Britain charges 2 Russians over poisoning

By JILL LAWLESS
Associated Press

LONDON — British officials announced Wednesday that they have charged two Russian men with the nerve agent poisoning of ex-spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in the English city of Salisbury — though they held out little hope of being able to bring them to justice.

The Crown Prosecution Service said the men, who entered the country under the names Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Bushinov, are being charged in absentia with conspiracy to murder, attempted murder and use of the nerve agent Novichok.

Prosecutor Sue Hemming said the U.K. would not ask Moscow to

extradite the men because Russian law forbids extradition of the country's citizens. Britain has issued domestic and European arrest warrants for the suspects, meaning they can be detained if they leave Russia for another European country.

But assistant commissioner Neil Basu, head of counterterrorism at London's Metropolitan Police, conceded it was "very, very unlikely" police would be in a position to arrest them anytime soon.

Police said the suspects, both about 40, flew from Moscow to London on Russian passports two days before the Skripals were poisoned on March 4. Basu said the passports were genuine but the men were probably using aliases, and he appealed to the

public "to come forward and tell us who they are."

Sergei Skripal — a former Russian agent who had been convicted in his homeland of spying for Britain — and his daughter were found collapsed on a bench in the cathedral city of Salisbury, 90 miles southwest of London. They spent weeks hospitalized in critical condition and are now recovering in a secret location for their own protection.

British authorities and the international chemical weapons watchdog say the Skripals were exposed to Novichok, a type of military-grade nerve agent developed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

Britain blames the Russian government for the attack, a claim

Moscow denies. The poisoning ignited a diplomatic confrontation in which hundreds of envoys were expelled by both Russia and Western nations.

Police on Wednesday gave new details about what Basu called "one of the most complex investigations" the force had ever seen.

The police force released a series of images of the men as they traveled through London and Salisbury between March 2 and March 4. Police say the two men flew back to Moscow from Heathrow Airport on the evening of March 4, hours after the Skripals were found.

Police believe the nerve agent used to poison the Skripals was smuggled to Britain in a counterfeit Nina Ricci perfume bottle

and applied to the front door of Sergei Skripal's house.

More than three months later, the bottle was found by a local man, Charlie Rowley, 48.

He was hospitalized and his girlfriend Dawn Sturgess, 44, died after being exposed to the contents.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons confirmed Tuesday that Rowley and Sturgess were also exposed to Novichok.

Police are still trying to determine where the bottle was between the Skripal poisoning in March and its discovery by Rowley on June 27.

As a result, Basu said, police are not yet ready to bring charges in the second poisoning.

Japanese airport still closed after typhoon damage

By MARI YAMAGUCHI
Associated Press

TOKYO — One of Japan's busiest airports remained closed indefinitely after the strongest typhoon to hit Japan in at least 25 years flooded a runway and other facilities while damaging other infrastructure and causing at least 10 deaths as it swept across part of Japan's main island.

More than 400,000 households in western and central Japan were without power Wednesday, a day after Typhoon Jebi struck with sustained winds of 100 miles per hour at landfall. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said at least 10 people were confirmed dead and about 300 people were injured.

A tanker that became unmoored by the typhoon's pounding waves and wind slammed into a bridge linking offshore Kansai International Airport to the mainland, damaging the bridge and the ship and stranding 3,000 passengers overnight at the airport. Under sunny skies Wednesday morning, they left by boat or were transported by buses across an intact road on the damaged bridge.

The airport is built on two artificial islands in Osaka Bay, and the high seas flooded one of the runways, cargo storage and other facilities, said the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. One passenger was slightly injured by shards from a window shattered by the storm.

Airport officials could not say when the airport would resume operations. Flooding has largely subsided, but assessments were still being done on possible damage to equipment key to flight operations and repairs of the damaged bridge.

Factories in the region, including automaker Daihatsu Motor Co. and electronics giant Panasonic as well as major beverage maker Kirin Co. suspended production at most of its factories in Osaka and nearby prefectures Tuesday, though most of them were expected to resume operation Wednesday, Kyodo News agency reported.

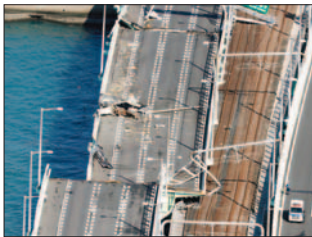
The Universal Studios Japan theme park in Osaka closed for a second day Wednesday but said in a news release it would reopen Thursday.

The deaths included a man in his 70s who was blown to the ground from his apartment in Osaka prefecture. Police said five others died elsewhere in the prefecture after being hit by flying objects or falling from their apartments.

In nearby Shiga prefecture, a 71-year-old man died when a storage building collapsed on him, and a man in his 70s died after falling from a roof in Mie, officials said.



Kyodo News/AP



HIROKO HAMINA, KYODO NEWS/AP



SAYAKA KAMOHARA, MAINICHI NEWSPAPER/AP

From top: Passengers stranded by Typhoon Jebi wait for buses Wednesday at Kansai International Airport. An aerial view shows a damaged bridge connecting Kansai International Airport to the mainland a day after a tanker slammed into its side. The airport is partly inundated Tuesday following the typhoon.

Pompeo in Pakistan to 'reset' relations

By KATHY GANNON
Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo arrived in Pakistan on Wednesday at a time when relations between the two countries have sunk to a new low.

The United States last weekend canceled a \$340 million Coalition Support Fund payment to Pakistan, and onboard the plane to Pakistan, Pompeo announced his appointment of an unpopular figure in Pakistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, as the new U.S. special adviser on Afghan reconciliation.

Pompeo said he wanted to "reset" strained relations with Pakistan, but the appointment of Khalilzad could complicate his job.

"He has been very critical of Pakistan in the past and his appointment will not help move things forward," said Zahid Hussain, defense analyst and author of two books on militancy in the region.

Khalilzad was born in Afghanistan and served as U.S. special envoy to the country following the collapse of the Taliban from 2001 to 2003 and then as U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan from 2003 to 2005.

He has been critical of Pakistan, often blaming Afghanistan's deteriorating security and countrywide chaos on Pakistan's military and powerful ISI intelligence agency, accusing them of harboring and aiding Taliban insurgents.

Khalilzad has been criticized for his role in cobbling together an Afghan government of warlords headed by Hamid Karzai following the Taliban's collapse. Afghanistan's corruption-plagued government and, by some accounts, poorly trained Afghan National Security Forces have frustrated Afghans and contributed to the country's deteriorating security situation.

Pompeo met newly elected Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan who said he was "optimistic" the two countries might be able to "reset" their troubled relationship.

"You know I'm a born optimist. A sportsman always is an optimist. He steps on the field and he thinks he's going to win," said Khan, who is revered in Pakistan for his former cricket stardom. He led Pakistan's cricket team to the championship of the 1994 World Cup competition, played every four years.

There were no immediate details about the talks.

Foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi termed his separate meeting with Pompeo as "excellent." Both he and Pompeo said they were "pleased" with their meeting but offered no details.

Although neither the U.S. nor Pakistan can afford a complete rupture in relations, Hussain said Islamabad is frustrated that the relationship has been reduced to a single point agenda: Afghanistan.

"The United States seems only to see Pakistan through the prism of Afghanistan," he said. "The main thing is we would like to be allies with the U.S. but with dignity."

Speaking to reporters on his plane Tuesday, Pompeo was conciliatory. He said he wanted to visit Khan at the beginning of the former cricket star's tenure "in an effort to reset the relationship between the two countries."

"We have worked closely with the Pakistanis in my role as CIA director; our teams have been working together for a long time," said Pompeo, former chief of the U.S. spy agency.

"I hope we can turn the page and begin to make progress, but there are real expectations. We need Pakistan to seriously engage to help us get to the reconciliation we need in Afghanistan," Pompeo said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Tenant calls cops after blood drips from ceiling

FL MARGATE — A neighbor's call to police after noticing blood dripping from the ceiling of a South Florida apartment led to a grim discovery in the upstairs unit.

Margate police Lt. Joseph Galaska told news outlets Monday that Nicholas Mantzouranis, 84, killed his wife, Sally, 66, before turning the gun on himself.

Galaska said the tenant told a maintenance worker about the red substance seeping from the ceiling Sunday afternoon.

Paramedics and police were called to the apartment to perform a wellness check. When no one answered the door, they removed it and found the bodies inside.

Report: Meteorologist hurt anchor in bar fight

WV CHARLESTON — A police report said a West Virginia TV anchor who was injured in a fight with a station meteorologist told authorities the fight was over her husband.

The Huntington Herald-Dispatch reported Tuesday the Charleston police report said WSAZ-TV on-air forecaster Chelsea Ambriz and station anchor Erica Bivens were at a bar last week when the fight started.

The report said Bivens told police Ambriz was flirting with her husband, and a confrontation between the two women ended in a fight.

Ambriz is accused of shoving Bivens, causing the anchor to suffer a fractured skull and ruptured ear drum. The 26-year-old is charged with misdemeanor battery.

Patient jumps out of ambulance, is killed

CA DUBLIN — Authorities in Northern California said a patient jumped out of a moving ambulance on a highway and was struck and killed by a passing car.

The California Highway Patrol told KTVU-TV the unidentified woman was being taken Monday from a medical center in Pleasanton to a psychiatric hospital in San Leandro.

The CHP said the woman got out of her restraints, overpowered a paramedic and jumped out as the ambulance was coming to a stop on a ramp connecting two highways. She was declared dead at the scene.

Unique log cabin mansion up for sale

WY CODY — A northwest Wyoming mansion that features unusual architecture is up for sale for \$750,000.

Known as the Smith Mansion, the 75-foot-tall, five-story log cabin is a cavalcade of whimsy, towering over a hill that overlooks the surrounding landscape.

Built by engineer Francis Lee Smith, the house is a mishmash of designs, intercrossing wood and activity rooms.

THE CENSUS

\$40K

The approximate worth of rare insects and reptiles stolen from a Philadelphia insectarium. Authorities said the suspects stole about 90 percent of the animals at the Philadelphia Insectarium and Butterfly Pavilion on Aug. 22 and possibly other days. Police said staff uniforms were found stabbed into a wall with knives. Police said some of the insects, including a Mexican fireleg tarantula, have been returned. Insectarium chief executive Dr. John Cambridge believes the animals were stolen to be resold.



STUART VILLANUEVA, THE GALVESTON (TEXAS) COUNTY DAILY NEWS/AP

Making the best of the situation

Johnny Jones drinks a beer while floating and watching a single-file line of drivers make their way down Broadway Boulevard after heavy rains caused substantial street flooding in Galveston, Texas, on Monday. Parts of Galveston received more than 10 inches of rain.

The Cody Enterprise reported that the home has been the subject of numerous articles, documentaries and TV commercials over the years.

Real estate agent Scott Richard said it's up to the buyer whether to keep the unique structure intact or demolish it and build anew.

Officials seek bear with head stuck in container

NC ASHEVILLE — Residents in western North Carolina are concerned about a fate of a bear that's been spotted several times in recent weeks with a plastic container stuck to its head.

WLOS-TV reported that it has gotten multiple reports and seen multiple images of the bear in Henderson County since early August.

State Wildlife Resources officials advise people to call them immediately but not approach the bear if they see it.

Wildlife officials said the bear is able to breathe and drink with the container attached but likely isn't able to eat.

Butterfly-killing invasive plant found in state

MI KINGSLEY — Officials in northern Michigan are working to get rid of an invasive plant that poisons monarch butterflies.

The Traverse City Record-Eagle reported the black swallow-wort was recently spotted in downtown Kingsley. The vine has heart-shaped leaves and small, dark purple flowers. It typically grows along roadsides, pastures and gardens.

Emily Cook, of the Northwest Michigan Invasive Species Network, said the plant attracts monarch butterflies, which often lay their eggs on it. But caterpillars will be poisoned when they hatch and begin to eat the plant.

Night sky beckons stargazers to park

ME BAR HARBOR — There are few places in the country to get a better look at the night sky than Acadia National Park, and stargazers are

meeting there to do just that.

The Acadia Night Sky Festival bills itself as "the premier night sky event on the Eastern seaboard" and it takes place all over Mount Desert Island, Bar Harbor and the Schoodic Peninsula.

Organizers say the star celebration is a multiday festival that includes more than three dozen events dedicated to the enjoyment of Maine's night sky.

This year's event runs through Sunday.

High school football score sets record

IA COUNCIL BLUFFS — Council Bluffs Jefferson beat Sioux City North 99-81 Friday in the highest-scoring game in the history of Iowa high school football.

Council Bluffs led 57-21 at halftime. North rallied to score 60 points in the second half but still lost by 18, according to an unofficial box score provided to The Associated Press by Council Bluffs coach Brent Anderson.

Jefferson put up 99 points on the strength of a rushing attack that

put up a staggering 749 yards on 67 carries. Cameron Baker had 358 yards and eight touchdowns. Jermaine Green added 209 yards and two touchdowns.

Sioux City North QB Matt Hagan threw for 310 yards and nine touchdowns in the losing effort.

New safari exhibit opens in Topeka Zoo

KS TOPEKA — Visitors to the Topeka Zoo's newest exhibit can now experience what it's like to go on a safari.

The exhibit is based on zoo director emeritus Gary Clarke's experiences leading safaris, the Topeka Capital-Journal reported.

The entrance features a mixed species animal exhibit with patas monkeys, guinea fowl and tortoises. The exhibit opens onto Dung Beetle Square, which displays a Land Rover sourced from South Africa, a hot-air balloon basket and a canoe, all of which are modes of safari transportation.

The exhibit is part of a larger plan that involves the zoo opening a tract of land for the elephants.

From wire reports

FACES

'I feel good. I feel strong'

Julia Louis-Dreyfus is thrilled about her 'Veep' return

By LEANNE ITALIE
Associated Press

Julia Louis-Dreyfus is back at work on "Veep" and said it feels "fantastic."

The star of the HBO comedy series revealed last September that she had been diagnosed with breast cancer. The news came soon after her sixth consecutive Emmy win for the role of Selina Meyer.

As work began recently on the show's seventh and final season, Louis-Dreyfus told The Associated Press: "I feel good. I feel strong. I've got energy and, yeah, back to my old tricks. It feels like I never left."

The "Seinfeld" alum has signed on to her first cancer awareness initiative, helping Carolina Herrera designer Wes Gordon design a flower-adorned T-shirt as part of Saks Fifth Avenue's 20th year raising money through its Key to the Cure program. The limited-edition shirt

will sell for \$35 at Saks stores Oct. 1-31, with 100 percent of proceeds passed to the AiRS Foundation, a nonprofit Louis-Dreyfus supports for its work in helping women with the costs of breast reconstruction after mastectomy.

"Up to 70 percent of breast cancer survivors who have had a mastectomy are really unsure or unaware of their reconstruction options, and many of those women who desire to have surgery don't have sufficient insurance or other resources to cover it," Louis-Dreyfus said by phone on a recent location day for "Veep."

As a survivor, she said she's often asked

to help out. This is the first time she has said yes.

"It's hard to say no, but I've just had to be very careful about managing my time and conserving my energy, so you know I'm putting my whole self into Key to the Cure," Louis-Dreyfus said. "You can't spread yourself too thin. That's why I wanted to choose the organization wisely and carefully."

As this year's ambassador for the program, Louis-Dreyfus said she wanted a bold statement for the annual T-shirt. It features three poppies and the slogan: "We are fighters & we are fighting for a cure."

Julia Louis-Dreyfus is at work on "Veep" after her breast cancer diagnosis last year. She helped design a T-shirt, sales of which will be given to the AiRS Foundation, a nonprofit the actress supports. HBO

NBC orders new Law & Order series about hate crimes

From wire reports

Nearly 28 years after "Law & Order" first aired, the franchise keeps growing.

On Tuesday, NBC announced it has ordered 13 episodes of "Law & Order: Hate Crimes," a series inspired by New York City's Hate Crimes Task Force.

The new unit will be introduced in the latter part of the upcoming 20th season of "Law & Order: SVU," according to NBC.

The spinoff is co-created by Dick Wolf, the executive producer and driving force behind the Law & Order and Chicago franchises, and Warren Leight, former show-runner of "SVU."

The series will aim to tackle a relevant subject matter at a time when hate crimes are on the rise in major American cities, noted the press statement from NBC.

"As with all of my crime shows, I want to depict what's really going on in our cities and shine a light on the wide-ranging victims and show that justice can prevail," Wolf said in the statement.

Mana is Latin Grammys' Person of the Year

Mexican rock band Mana will be honored as Person of the Year 2018 by the Latin Recording Academy on the eve of the Latin Grammys.

The winner of six Latin Grammys and four Grammy Awards will be recognized for its achievements and contributions to the Latin community and its support of the preservation and protection of the environment and human rights.

Mana will be honored Nov. 14 in Las Vegas, where a variety of Latin stars will be performing some of the hits from Mana's repertoire.

Other news

■ The Los Angeles County district attorney's office has declined to file charges against three actors accused of sexual abuse in the wake of the #MeToo movement. Kevin Spacey and Steven Seagal

won't face criminal charges following allegations from the 1990s because the alleged incidents are beyond the statute of limitations, and prosecutors rejected filing a charge against "black-ish" actor Anthony Anderson, citing insufficient evidence.

■ Colton Underwood, a former NFL player who maintains he's still a virgin, has been named the next "Bachelor" on ABC's hit series. "[W]hat I'm looking forward to is getting married shortly after that," he said Tuesday on "Good Morning America." "The Bachelor" returns in January 2019 on ABC.

■ Entertainer, actress, singer and songwriter Dolly Parton will be honored at the 2019 MusiCares Person of the Year tribute event. The Recording Academy announced Tuesday that Parton will be the first artist from the Nashville music community honored at the annual MusiCares charity gala, which raises money for those in the musical community in times of financial, medical and personal

need. The tribute will be held in Los Angeles on Feb. 8.

■ The California mansion where Demi Lovato reportedly overdosed this summer is now on the market. The pop star recently listed her sprawling Los Angeles-area house for \$945 million as she continues to seek treatment for substance issues, according to People. "Her house is up for sale," a source told the magazine. "She's getting healthy and putting the past behind her."

■ Harrison Ford and Lady Gaga are being honored by the SAG-AFTRA Foundation with the Artists Inspiration Award for their contributions to humanitarian and philanthropic causes. The nonprofit organization says Tuesday that the awards will be presented at its third annual Patron of the Artists Awards in November.

■ Bill Cosby's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame was vandalized by someone who scrawled the words "serial rapist." The graffiti appeared sometime at the end of the Labor Day weekend.

Actor quits after online job-shaming

By RACHEL DESANTIS
New York Daily News

Former "Cosby Show" star Geoffrey Owens isn't mourning his career or past success, despite being "job shamed" by some media outlets.

Owens doesn't want sympathy after he was job-shamed for bagging groceries at Trader Joe's — because after all, as he says, "There is no job that's better than another job."

"The Cosby Show" actor appeared on "Good Morning America" on Tuesday to discuss his relaunch into the public eye after news outlets were accused of job-shaming Owens for sharing photos of him working as a cashier in Clifton, N.J.

"When I first saw the pictures, I was really devastated. But the period of devastation was so short, because so shortly after that, my wife and I started to read these responses from all over the world of support," he said. "So fortunately the shame part didn't last very long. It hurt, but it's amazing."

The headlines were slammed by fans and famous faces alike, with many expressing anger that outlets would shame a man simply trying to make a living. The story also inspired many stars to share their own stories of side hustles they took on to make ends meet while they pursued acting.

Owens said he started work at Trader Joe's because, after teaching acting and directing for more than 30 years, it "got to a point where it just didn't add up" — and the grocery store offered flexibility.

The 57-year-old actor said he worked there for 15 months and was recognized nearly every day, but has since had to quit the gig.

"No one should feel sorry for me either from a positive or negative perspective," he said. "I've had a great life; I've had a great career. I've had a career that most actors would die for. So no one has to feel sorry for me."

Owens added that he hoped the experience would allow others to rethink what it means to work, and would let people realize that no job should be held in higher esteem than another. "There is no job that's better than another job," he said. "It might pay better, it might have better benefits, it might look better on a résumé on paper, but actually, it's not better."



ABC/AP

"The Cosby Show" actor Geoffrey Owens is interviewed by Rob Roberts on "Good Morning America," on Tuesday.

Stripes

SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market




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OPINION

Could be big group seeking to unseat Trump

By CARL P. LEUBSDORF
The Dallas Morning News

The Democratic National Committee's revised rules ensure that, when the wide-open 2020 presidential nominating race formally begins just 17 months from now, the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary will retain their influential places as the first two contests.

But little-noticed changes and other unique aspects of the 2020 race could render those two contests far less influential than in the past.

From Vice President Al Gore to Hillary Clinton, the last four Democratic Iowa caucus winners went on to win their party's nomination. Interestingly, the last two New Hampshire winners, Clinton in 2008 and Sen. Bernie Sanders in 2016, did not.

These are the 2020 factors that may limit prospects for an early breakthrough:

■ A large field. Democratic strategist Donna Brazile last year counted more than 50 people who were either looking at presidential bids or had been mentioned by others as prospective candidates. Presumably fewer will run, early signs are the initial Democratic field could easily surpass the 17 Republican 2016 candidates. That could handicap the many lesser known aspirants from gaining visibility in a field that could be headed by such well-known Democrats as former Vice President Joe Biden, Sanders and Sen. Elizabeth Warren. It will challenge Democratic leaders to devise a fairer format in structuring candidate debates than the GOP's 2016 reliance on national polls, something they have already started considering.

■ Iowa rules. Changes in the upcoming 2020 nominating round, the DNC accepted without discussion two significant changes proposed by its unity panel for caucuses, notably in Iowa. Absentee voting will be included, and a major change will be made in

how the results are tallied.

In the past, the Iowa Democratic Party announced the number of delegates elected to county conventions only after precinct caucus participants whose candidates had less than 15 percent were forced to switch to rival candidates. But in 2020, the raw vote of all caucus attendees will be counted, as the Republicans do.

So far this year, 15 Democratic prospects have visited Iowa, ranging from 2018 runner-up Sanders to celebrity lawyer Michael Avenatti. Two little-known House members have made the most 2018 visits—Reps. John Delaney, of Maryland, the only formally announced candidate, and Eric Swalwell, of California, a frequent cable news interviewee. Given how the votes will be tabulated and the size of the field, it's inevitable that many candidates will get sniped by the leaders. There will get fewer. That could produce a muddled outcome in which no candidate reaches 20 percent and half a dozen exceed 10 percent.

In other caucus states, adding absentees will likely increase the turnout, which could reduce the influence of party activists, who barely saw Barack Obama in 2008 and Sanders in 2016.

■ New Hampshire primary. New England candidates have always had a big advantage in the New Hampshire primary. Since 1972, five candidates from neighboring states have won contested Democratic primaries. The only New Englander to lose in 1980 and Joe Lieberman in 2004 have lost, the latter to defeat a New Englander, Sen. John Kerry.

But the 2020 field could include two prominent New Englanders — Warren from Massachusetts and Sanders from Vermont. Early polling places them among the top three with Biden.

The two reportedly have discussed potential problems if both run, but it's hard to imagine one withdrawing in favor of the other. If they dominate the primary, it's

questionable how much value a victory by either would have, unless the winner finished near the top in Iowa.

■ President Donald Trump. If, as expected, Trump seeks re-election and if, as expected, he receives a primary challenge, party frontrunner Ohio Gov. John Kasich, that race could dominate early campaign coverage. That might reduce the influence of the Democratic contest, especially if it's the muddle with no clear leader. The ultimate beneficiaries: the best known candidates, be they veteran politicians like Biden or media celebrities like Avenatti.

Domination of early coverage by then-Vice President George H.W. Bush's GOP struggle against Sen. Bob Dole, the Iowa winner, and televangelist Pat Robertson, diminished the impact of Rep. Richard Gephardt's Iowa Democratic victory. Only when Bush clearly won New Hampshire did the Democrats get more attention, led by New Hampshire winner Michael Dukakis and Jesse Jackson.

A muddled Democratic Iowa result and a New Englander's home turf victory in New Hampshire would elevate the third and fourth Democratic contests, the Nevada caucuses and the South Carolina primary. The last two nominees, Obama and Clinton, won both states. Sanders' campaigning this year for prominent black gubernatorial candidates seems aimed at reversing his poor 2016 showing among black voters, a major South Carolina constituency.

Still, the party's proportional allocation of delegates plus multiple early-state winners could enable three or four candidates to survive the March 3 "Super Tuesday" primaries in California, Texas, Massachusetts, Virginia and several other states.

Like the GOP in 2016, it's going to be a wild ride with an unforeseeable finish.

Carl P. Leubsdorf is a former Washington bureau chief of The Dallas Morning News.

Howling over Kavanaugh a screen test for Dems

By KATHLEEN PARKER
Washington Post Writers Group

If you missed Day One of Brett Kavanaugh's Supreme Court hearing, just try to imagine a mud-wrestling contest attended by banshees howling at the referee.

Between senators interrupting the all-wise-and-patient Supreme Court committee Chairman Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, and shrieking protesters, the proceedings were a low-brow to resort to the usual circus metaphor. It was a performance, all right, but it was embarrassing to watch.

The faldorl was allegedly about a document dump from the Kavanaugh team that arrived Democratic members' offices Monday night, too late for staffers to read and analyze everything. These were the last of nearly a half-million pages provided to the Senate — or more than the total for the past five nominees combined, according to Ed Whelan, president of the conservative Ethics and Public Policy Center.

Tuesday morning began with Grassley attempting to begin the hearing, and Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., attempting to immediately adjourn. Next came Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., followed by Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., etc., etc.

This choreographed effort to obstruct the proceedings continued most of the morning. Republicans could barely speak without a Democrat barging through the gossamer veil of mutual respect, while the audience, including an organized cabal of shriekers, seemed to think this was a multimedia carnival in which participation

is welcome. All that was missing was the canned laughter.

Throughout, Kavanaugh sat solemnly stoic, looking very much the law student who keeps his eyes on the professor's face to avoid staring at the mustard stain on his tie. Every now and then, he appeared to jolt down a note, though given the debate taking place, he might have been sketching scarecrow.

So what about those 42,000 pages? It is a rather large document. How to admit. And what about the last-minute dump? Isn't that an act of bad faith? Not necessarily.

First, the last-minute dump is a time-honored tradition in the nation's capital and a common tactic in litigation. Lawyers will do what lawyers do. As for the winning about needing more time, really? This is Washington, folks, where Starbucks is literally on all four corners of a downtown park. Teams of fast skimmers and a case or two of Red Bull could have produced a rash of salient bullet points by breakfast — if Democrats were really curious. Happens all the time. Indeed, Kavanaugh's legal team, with communications adviser, tweeted Tuesday that the senator's legal documents team reviewed the full stack Monday. "We had 15 people working on it."

But this is a case of style over content. Tuesday's takeaways can be distilled to four points: (1) Democrats will do anything to postpone confirmation until after the midterm elections, when they hope to blue-wash the Senate; (2) at least two Democratic committee members (Harris and Cory Booker, of New Jersey) are running for president and needed to show their chops; (3) the Democratic Party base

needed a backup; (4) Democrats want to be able to say, "We tried."

As for the quantity of documents, Kavanaugh suffers from his own work ethic and productivity, which has resulted in a vast paper trail that is far longer than anyone else's in Supreme Court history. Indeed, members of this Judiciary Committee know far more about Kavanaugh than they've known about any other nominee.

But Democrats remain obsessed with the document dump. It's not as if they never get this, too, has become a weapon in their arsenal. These 101,921 pages, which pertain to Kavanaugh's tenure as White House staff secretary to George W. Bush, are protected by executive privilege because they contain candid deliberations, "the confidentiality of which is critical to any President's ability to carry out this core executive function," according to Bill Burk, Bush's presidential records representative.

Democrats now complaining about the inappropriateness of this protection was the doozy of all of them. The estimable Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., not so long ago co-signed a letter to the Bush Library acknowledging that some documents should never be released. And Democrats had no objection when some of Elena Kagan's records weren't disclosed during her confirmation hearing. Alas, but for a few rhetorical flourishes here and there, it's all just a partisan show, ladies and gentlemen. Politicians will pontificate; screamers will scream; Grassley will maintain his reputation for fairness and integrity. And Kavanaugh will be freed.

Let's get on with it.

Frazz



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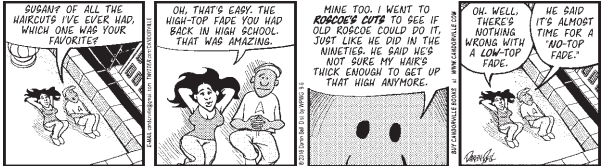
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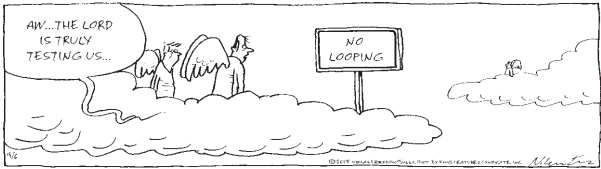
Non Sequitur



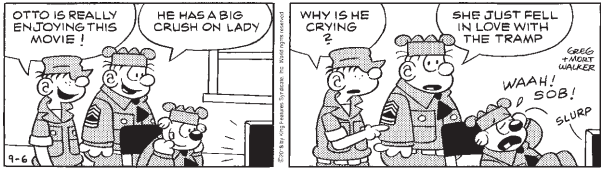
Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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12						13				14		
15						16				17		
18								19	20			
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41	42						43			44	45	46
47						48	49	50				
51						52				53		
54						55				56		

ACROSS

- Doorframe piece
- Selected from a group
- Pop
- Sluggish Moises
- Killer whale
- Where Lux. is
- Clarinets and flutes
- One-time link
- Forward
- Fund
- "Tiny Bubbles" singer Don
- Mouselike mammal
- Bart's sister
- Tax prep pro
- Talk up
- Bat wood
- Squeak stopper
- Musie's Yoko
- Incubator noise
- White House nickname
- Tosses in
- Moscow money
- Man's address
- Lion's color
- Coffee bar orders
- Green prefix
- Groundhog
- "I love," to Livy
- Italian wine region
- French 101 verb

DOWN

- British verb ending
- Robin Hood's forest
- Spring
- German conjunction
- Earth orbiter
- 35 Bit of wit
- McDonald's emblem
- Side road
- Soft shoe, for short
- Pond duck
- Summit
- Car
- Sketch
- Rome
- Romance
- Jabba the —
- Farm fraction
- Dis tort
- Sugary suffix
- Mel of baseball
- 43 1502, in Old

Answer to Previous Puzzle

F	I	S	H	L	O	B	T	U	S
O	N	E	I	E	U	R	R	E	B
G	R	A	F	F	I	T	I	O	X
S	E	R	I	E	S	T	O	A	R
			S	T	U	S	A	S	
D	I	N	A	R	E	T	E	T	R
U	F	O	S	E	G	G	D	E	A
B	A	B	E	L	O	R	D	A	N
			I	C	E	S	A	I	L
R	E	L	E	N	T	N	E	A	R
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C	I	T	E	R	I	M	K	E	E
K	E	Y	S	S	P	A	S	S	N

9-6

CRYPTOQUIP

P B I D U O L O F K O L
N D C M E R E X K Q L O N D F
O G C D M C P D X E L D M O L I D M ' Q
G O K C P G B X U E N R O L K E L :
C E L C E , E L C O M K E .


Yesterday's Cryptquip: WHAT WOULD A STRUCTURE BE THAT SPANNED ACROSS TWO RING-SHAPED CORAL ISLANDS? ATOLL BRIDGE.
Today's Cryptquip Clue: L equals N

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US OPEN

Nadal, Williams rally after shaky starts

By HOWARD FENDRICH
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Rafael Nadal began his U.S. Open quarterfinal as poorly as possible, shut out in a set by a 6-0 score for only the fourth time in 282 career Grand Slam matches.

On the previous three such occasions, he'd lost. On this one, he managed to come back to win, although it took 4 hours, 49 minutes and never did get easy for him.

The defending champion and No. 1 seed at Flushing Meadows recovered from his disastrous start and other stumbles along the way to beat No. 9 Dominic Thiem 6-6, 6-4, 7-5, 6-7 (4), 7-6 (5) for a semifinal berth at a third consecutive Grand Slam tournament, winning a physical, back-and-forth tussle that concluded after 2 a.m. on Wednesday.

How tense and tight was this one? Not only was Nadal two points from losing at 5-all in the closing tiebreaker, but he finished with fewer total points, 171-166.

"It's cruel, sometimes, tennis," Thiem said, calling the loss "the first really epic match I've played."

When it ended, on an overhead by Thiem that sailed long, everyone in Nadal's guest box — a group that included actor Ben Stiller — leaped to their feet to celebrate. Nadal climbed over the net to hug his opponent, then whisper an apology and words of encouragement.

"I'm very sorry for Dominic," Nadal told a rowdy crowd in Arthur Ashe Stadium. "He's a close friend on tour. He's a great guy. A great player."

Asked about that at his news conference, Thiem said with a chuckle: "Well, I don't think he's really sorry."

This rematch of the French Open final in June, won by Nadal, was his first match against a top-20 opponent at the U.S. Open since 2013, when he beat then-No. 1 Novak Djokovic in the final.

Serena Williams began her quarterfinal tentatively, facing the last player she lost to at Flushing Meadows. She kept looking up to her coach, as if seeking solutions. After just 20 minutes Tuesday night, Williams was in danger of trailing by two service breaks.



ADAM HUNGER/AP

Rafael Nadal, returns a shot to Dominic Thiem during the quarterfinals of the U.S. Open on Tuesday in New York. Nadal won 6-6, 6-4, 7-5, 6-7 (4), 7-6 (5).

Not much later, the outcome was no longer in doubt, because the 23-time Grand Slam champion suddenly was in complete control.

Williams put aside some early shakiness and an early deficit, turning things around with an eight-game run en route to a 6-4, 6-3 victory over No. 8 seed Karolina Pliskova for a spot in the semifinals. It was Williams' first win over a top-10 player this season.

"I was playing really not a good game," said Williams, who was a point from trailing 4-1 and did fall behind 4-2 while making 22 of her 30 unforced errors in the first set. "I was thinking, 'You know, I can play better.' So that was the good news."

With her older sister, Venus — the woman Serena beat in the third round — in her guest box, Williams looked tight. Her timing was off. She put a backhand into the net to get broken to 2-1 at the outset. Then, down 3-1, she faced three break points; if Pliskova won one, she would have led 4-1. But Pliskova did not manage to put any of Williams' serves in play on those key points.

"Too strong," Pliskova said.

Williams' semifinal opponent will be No. 19 seed Anastasiya Sevastova of Latvia, who surprisingly beat defending champion Sloane Stephens 6-2, 6-3 earlier Tuesday.

Stephens, who said she had been dealing with a sinus infection, rued all of her wasted opportunities, most notably the seven break points she failed to convert in the first set. She sure didn't attempt to hide her frustration, either, repeatedly gesturing toward or speaking in the direction of her coach, Kamau Murray, up in the stands.

It sure seemed at the shocking outset of Nadal's match that he was somehow unprepared for this step up in competition. Thiem collected 24 of the opening set's 31 points, thanks in large part to a 13-3 edge in winners.

Hard to not think back to 24 hours earlier, when Nadal's great rival, No. 2 seed Roger Federer, was upset in the fourth round during similarly muggy conditions. Nadal was sweating so much in the 90-degree heat and 50-percent humidity that a mountain of white towels formed next to his changeover bench.

Thiem made him work for this win. And how.

The depth and strength of Thiem's groundstrokes were doing what Nadal's shots usually do to opponents: robbing them of time and space. Plus, Thiem — an Austrian who turned 25 on Monday — was serving well, taking every point when he put a first serve in, and handling returns without a hitch.

"For me, it was a very tough start," Nadal said. "Then I tried to stay in the match, in some way."

It took a while for Nadal to figure out what was wrong and become Thiem's equal in entertaining, body-punishing baseline exchanges that inspired loud gasps from spectators. Still, this whole contest was filled with challenges for Nadal.

When Nadal makes it this far in New York, he usually doesn't stumble. He has now won seven U.S. Open quarterfinals in a row when he's made it that far; his only loss in that round came in 2006.

He is bidding for a fourth title at Flushing Meadows and 18th Grand Slam trophy overall.

On Friday, Nadal will take on

Scoreboard

Tuesday

at USTA Billie Jean King
National Tennis Center
New York
(seedings in parentheses):

Men's Singles

Quarterfinals
Rafael Nadal (1, Spain, def. Dominic Thiem (9, Austria), 6-6, 6-4, 7-5, 6-7 (4), 7-6 (5).
Juan Martin del Potro (3, Argentina, def. John Isner (11), United States, 6-7 (5), 6-3, 7-6 (4), 6-2.

Women's Singles

Quarterfinals
Serena Williams (17, United States, def. Karolina Pliskova (8, Czech Republic), 6-4, 6-3.
Anastasiya Sevastova (19, Latvia, def. Sloane Stephens (3, United States), 6-2, 6-3.

Men's Doubles

Quarterfinals
Lukasz Kubot, Poland and Marcelo Melo (7, Brazil), def. Austin Krajicek, United States and Teyssand Sandgren, United States, 6-4, 6-2.
Robert Farah, Colombia and Juan Sebastian Cabal (5, Colombia), def. Edouard Roger-Vasselin, France and Rohan Bopanna (15, India), 6-3, 6-4.

Women's Doubles

Quarterfinals
Coco Vandeweghe, United States and Ashleigh Barty (13, Australia), def. Irina Khromacheva, Russia and Dailia Jakupovic, Slovenia, 6-2, 6-3.

Kristina Mladenovic, France and Timea Babos (2, Hungary), def. Lucie Hradecka, Czech Republic and Ekaterina Makarova (6, Russia), 7-6 (5), 6-2.

Mixed Doubles

Quarterfinals
Christina McHale, United States and Christian Harrison, United States, def. Edouard Roger-Vasselin, France and Andrea Sestini Hlavackova (5, Czech Republic), 6-3, 6-4.
Nikola Pietrangeli, Croatia and Alicia Rosolska, Poland, def. Franko Skugor, Croatia and Raluca-Ioana Olaru, Romania, 7-6 (5), 6-4.

a familiar foe with a berth in the final on the line: 2009 champion and No. 3 seed Juan Martin del Potro, who defeated No. 11 John Isner 6-7 (5), 6-3, 7-6 (4), 6-2.

During that earlier quarterfinal, Isner doubled over and rested his elbows on his knees. He grimaced. He shook his head. He looked as if he wanted to be anywhere but where he was: falling further and further behind in energy-robbing heat.

"Whatever the humidity is on outer courts or in the city, I think it's amplified on center court," Isner said. "It's just very difficult to deal with. I have never seen Roger sweat ever. If he's sweating a lot and has to change clothes, then you know it's pretty humid out there."

Isner was bidding to become the first American man in a dozen years to get to the final four at Flushing Meadows.



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MLB

Hot Voit powers Yankees over Athletics

By MICHAEL WAGAMAN
Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Luke Voit let a changeup go by for a called strike on the first pitch from Fernando Rodney in the eighth inning. When the Athletics reliever tried sneaking another changeup past him, Voit sent it soaring into the left-field stands.

The big first baseman hit a tiebreaking home run, Adeiny Hechavarria also went deep and the New York Yankees beat Oakland 5-1 on Tuesday night.

"He's had a great changeup forever and I saw a good one first pitch," Voit said. "I was taking that approach just to stay right-center if he hangs it. He left a pitch up and I have to do some damage with it."

The Yankees didn't have a baserunner until the fifth inning and didn't get their first hit until the sixth. But they scored late off the normally reliable A's bullpen to even the series between the top two teams in the AL wild-card race.

New York increased its lead over Oakland to 4½ games for the first wild card.

Four pitchers combined on a two-hitter for the Yankees. David Robertson (8-3) retired three batters to earn the win. Brett Gardner singled twice and scored a pair of runs for New York. Aaron Hicks added two RBIs.

"This is like a playoff game," Voit said. "I think we're going to get hot at the right time. This team is so freaking dangerous, especially when we get some of these guys back from injuries. The sky's the limit and I'm excited."

Voit homered on an 0-1 pitch from Rodney (4-3), a towering solo shot to left field. Voit emphatically pointed to the Yankees dugout and smiled while heading toward first base as a large contingent of New York fans at the Coliseum cheered.

It was Voit's seventh home run in 12 games. "To see the Luke Voit show roll on, he's been terrific," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "He's got confidence deep down in his ability. He plays with a little bit of a swagger, but that's from a place of confidence."

Hicks, who drew a bases-loaded walk to

tie the game in the seventh, added a two-out RBI single later in the eighth.

Hechavarria homered in the ninth, his first with the Yankees after being acquired from Pittsburgh last week.

"It definitely felt nice," Hechavarria said through a translator. "The second pitch was a fastball and I was kind of late on that. I figured he was going to come back with that, and the next time around I was ready for it."

Stephen Piscotty hit his 32nd home run for Oakland.

For the second time in four games, the A's started a reliever. Liam Hendriks, who also started Saturday, pitched the first inning before Daniel Mengden took over in the second.

Mengden kept the Yankees hitless until Gleyber Torres singled just past diving shortstop Marcus Semien. Torres was promptly picked off by Ryan Buchter.

"It's more we just didn't do enough offensively tonight," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "No matter what we give up, even if it's two runs, when you get two hits, it's going to be a tough time winning."



BEN MAROZZ/AP

The Yankees' Luke Voit, right, celebrates with Tyler Wade after hitting a home run off the Athletics' Fernando Rodney during the eighth inning Tuesday in Oakland, Calif. New York won 5-1.

Piscotty homered off Yankees starter J.A. Happ in the second, matching his season-high set in 2016 with his 10th.

Roundup

Molina, Ozuna help Cardinals snap 3-game skid

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — St. Louis Cardinals manager Mike Shildt changed his lineup after arriving at Nationals Park, dropping catcher Yadier Molina from second to sixth.

Molina responded with a grand slam, Marcell Ozuna homered twice and the St. Louis Cardinals beat the Washington Nationals 11-8 on Tuesday night.

Molina's sixth career grand slam provided a cushion for St. Louis, making it 11-5 with two outs in the ninth.

"It did work out. We were happy with it," Shildt said. "Just thinking about different ways as the lineup has looked the last couple of days, maybe lengthening it out, spreading some things out a little bit."

The Cardinals, who occupy the second NL wild card spot, hit five homers overall as they stopped a three-game skid.

Right fielder Yairo Munoz robbed Ryan Zimmerman of a three-run homer in the bottom of the ninth, reaching over the fence and pulling it back into the field of play for a two-run double.

Tyson Ross (8-9) pitched 1½ innings for the win and Jordan Hicks got the final out for his sixth save in 11 chances.

Ozuna and Paul DeJong homered leading off the sixth inning to break a 4-4 tie, and one out later, Patrick Wisdom went deep to make it 7-4.

Making his second major league appearance, reliever Austin Williams (0-1) gave up all three of those homers. He allowed none in 68 innings this season in Double-A and Triple-A.

"There are just things that I might be able to do in the minor leagues that I can't here," Williams said.



AARON GASH/AP

The Brewers' Orlando Arcia slides in safely at home past the Cubs' Dillon Maples, top, on a wild pitch by Maples during the sixth inning Tuesday in Milwaukee. The Brewers won 11-1.

"I need to trust my breaking ball more and just try and be better with two strikes if I want to throw a fastball."

The 4-hour, 10-minute game included 16 walks and 20 strikeouts. St. Louis pitchers walked 11.

Red Sox 5, Braves 1: Steve Pearce had three hits and three RBIs, Rick Porcello allowed two runs in five innings and visiting Boston earned its second straight win in a matchup of division leaders.

Porcello (16-7) gave up one run and struck out five, improving to 10-3 on the road this year.

Brewers 11, Cubs 1: Lorenzo Cain reached base five times, Wade Miller pitched six stingy innings and host Milwaukee romped past Chicago to climb within three games of the NL Central leaders.

Miley (3-2) allowed one run and three hits, struck out five and walked none as Milwaukee won for the fifth time in its last six meetings with its division rival.

The second-place Brewers maintained a 1½-game lead over St. Louis for the top NL wild card.

Orioles 5, Mariners 3: A rough day for the Seattle Mariners that began with a clubhouse brawl ended with Baltimore rookie Renato Nunez and the visiting Orioles rallying to win.

Mariners' shortstop Jean Segura and teammate Dee Gordon tangled, while catcher Mike Zunino and others tried to break it up. The skirmish occurred four hours before the game at Safeco Field. Moments after Gordon politely asked reporters to leave the locker room, the double doors burst open with players shouting and shouting.

The Orioles had 15 hits and scored all five runs in the final three innings.

Dodgers 11, Mets 4: David Freese hit his first homer with his new club and Rich Hill rebounded from a sluggish start on the mound as host Los Angeles erased an early four-run deficit.

Rockies 6, Giants 2: Ryan McMahon had a pinch-hit home run and Carlos Gonzalez tripled with the bases loaded during a five-run seventh inning that carried host Colorado past San Francisco.

Diamondbacks 6, Padres 0: Robbie Ray struck out 10 and pitched two-hit ball for 6½ innings as host Arizona blanked San Diego to end a four-game losing streak.

Phillies 6, Marlins 4: Carlos Santana homered to start a four-run first inning and Philadelphia snapped a three-game losing streak by beating host Miami.

Astros 5, Twins 2: Alex Bregman hit three doubles and Yuli Gurriel homered for the second game in a row, leading Justin Verlander and host Houston to its fourth straight win.

Tigers 8, White Sox 3: A fan was hit in the face by a foul ball and bled profusely before walking to the first aid station, causing a brief delay during visiting Detroit's win.

Indians 9, Royals 3: Mike Clevinger struck out 10, Francisco Lindor hit another leadoff homer and host Cleveland ended a three-game losing streak.

Rangers 4, Angels 2: Adrian Beltre and Elvis Andrus each hit solo home runs in the fourth inning to lead host Texas.

Rays 4, Blue Jays 0: Ryne Stanek became the first rookie pitcher in 75 years to start consecutive games and combined with six relievers on a three-hit day as visiting Tampa Bay won its fourth in a row.

Pirates 7, Reds 3: Starling Marte hit a two-run homer, Gregory Polanco had a two-run double and host Pittsburgh toppled Cincinnati.

SCOREBOARD, FROM PAGE 27

Rays 4, Blue Jays 0

Tampa Bay	ab	r	h	bi	Toronto	ab	r	h	bi
M.Smith 1f-rf	5	0	1	1	D.Travis 2b	4	0	1	0
Pham dh	5	1	2	1	Smook lf	2	0	0	0
Bauer pr-dh	0	0	0	0	Morales cf	3	0	1	0
M.Duffy 3b	4	0	1	1	Grichuk rf	4	0	0	0
Cron lf	5	0	0	0	Pillar cf	4	0	0	0
Wendie 2b	3	0	0	0	T.Hrnf lf	3	0	0	0
Adames ss	4	0	0	0	D.Jensen c	3	0	0	0
Krmaric cf	2	1	1	0	A.Diaz 3b	3	0	0	0
C.Gomez rf	2	0	1	0	R.Urena ss	2	0	0	0
Lowie ph-rf	2	1	1	0					
Suarez c	1	0	0	0					
Choi ph	1	0	0	0					
Cleffo c	1	0	0	0					
Totals	35	4	8	4	Totals	29	0	3	0

Tampa Bay	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
E-D.Travis (8), DP—Tampa Bay 1, LOB—Tampa Bay 9, Toronto 28—Choi (12), D.Travis (11), 3B—Pham (2), SB—M.Smith (28), CS—Morales (3), S—Suarez (4), R.Urena (2).						

Tampa Bay	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Stanek	1	1	0	0	0	1
Guerrier	1	0	0	0	0	1
Ward 1b	2	0	0	0	0	1
Alvarado H,2B	1	0	0	0	0	4
Castillo	2	0	0	0	0	3
Kolarik	1	0	0	0	0	0
Romo 5,19-26	1	0	0	0	0	0
Toronto						
St.Louis L,3-4	6	3	3	2	2	5
Petricia	1	3	2	2	0	2
Pannone	1	1	0	0	0	0
Guerrier	1	0	0	0	0	0

Burchett pitched to 1 batter in the 7th inning for Stanek (Morales), by Sorucki (Kiermaier), by Pannone (Kiermaier). T—2:38. A—17,594 (\$5,506).

AL wild card

New York	W	L	Pct	WCGB
Oakland	83	57	.593	—
Seattle	77	62	.554	5½

Tuesday's game

N.Y. Yankees 5, Oakland 1
Wednesday's game
N.Y. Yankees at Oakland

NL wild card

Milwaukee	W	L	Pct	WCGB
St. Louis	79	61	.564	—
Los Angeles	77	62	.554	1
Philadelphia	76	63	.549	2
Philadelphia	73	65	.529	3½

Tuesday's game

St. Louis 11, Washington 8
Philadelphia 9, Miami 4
Milwaukee 11, Chicago Cubs 1
Arizona 6, San Diego 0
L.A. Dodgers 11, N.Y. Yankees 4

Wednesday's games

St. Louis at Washington
Philadelphia at Miami
N.Y. Mets at L.A. Dodgers
Chicago Cubs at Milwaukee
Thursday's games
Atlanta at Arizona

AUTO RACING/SPORTS BRIEFS/COLLEGE FOOTBALL

NASCAR's Furniture Row done

Team shutting down when season finishes

By JENNA FRYER
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Saying it cannot find enough funding to remain competitive, Furniture Row Racing announced Tuesday it will close its doors at the end of season, one year after Martin Truex Jr. won the maverick Colorado-based team its first NASCAR championship.

Team owner Barney Visser said it was a painful decision but "the numbers just don't add up."

"I would have to borrow money to continue as a competitive team and I'm not going to do that," Visser said.

Visser, a 69-year-old Denver native, owns one of the largest family-owned home furnishing and bedding retailers in the country. He suffered a heart attack two weeks before last year's season finale and was not able to attend Truex's title-clinching race or the championship celebration. Visser had previously said he would not shut down the team, but reversed his decision with just 11 races remaining this season.

"I had a wake-up call last year and while I feel great, I need to make the best decisions that will have an impact on myself and my family," Visser said.

Visser's decision comes just one week before NASCAR's playoffs begin with Truex expected to be a strong contender to defend his Cup Series title. Truex has dominated all season along with Kevin Harvick and Kyle Busch, but he has been dogged by talk of free agency.



NAM Y. HUN/AP

Martin Truex Jr. celebrates with his crew in Victory Lane after winning a Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series race at Chicagoland Speedway on Sept. 17, 2017 in Joliet, Ill. Furniture Row Racing will cease operations at the end of this season, shutting its doors one year after Truex won NASCAR's championship.

As weeks went by, Visser had not secured contract extensions with Truex, partner Joe Gibbs Racing or manufacturer Toyota. Visser has largely paid for the operation since its 2005 inception but was aided by sponsorship from 5-hour Energy, which plans to leave NASCAR at the end of the season.

"We've been aggressively seeking sponsorship to replace 5-hour Energy and to

offset the rising costs of continuing a team alliance with Joe Gibbs Racing, but haven't had any success," Visser said. "I feel that it's only proper to make the decision at this time to allow all team members to start seeking employment for next year."

That includes Truex and championship-winning crew chief Cole Pearn, who must seek new employment during the 10-race playoff push.

LSU loses Chaisson for rest of season

By BRETT MARTEL
Associated Press

LSU edge pass-rusher K'Lavon Chaisson's season is over after three productive quarters against Miami.

The 11th-ranked Tigers will have to make do without Chaisson because of a knee injury he suffered during a season-opening victory over the Hurricanes, LSU coach Ed Orgeron said Tuesday.

"I feel bad for him," Orgeron said. "He had totally dedicated himself to this year. He will bounce back. His teammates are very sad."

The 6-foot-4, 238-pound Chaisson was a prized 17th recruit from the Houston area who played often as a freshman and entered his sophomore campaign as the team's premier pass-rushing outside linebacker. He had one sack and was in on five tackles in a 33-17 victory on Sunday night that moved LSU from 25th to 11th in the AP Top 25 poll, while sinking Miami from No. 8 to No. 22.

As a freshman, Chaisson played in 12 games, starting three, and was in on 27

tackles, including two sacks and 4½ tackles for loss.

Orgeron declined to provide specific details on the injury, but trainers could be seen looking at Chaisson's left knee after it buckled during a play early in the fourth quarter. A person familiar with the situation, speaking to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because it wasn't announced, said Chaisson was diagnosed with a torn anterior cruciate ligament. That diagnosis was first reported by Sports Illustrated.

Chaisson took to social media to thank fans for their support.

"Thanks to everyone who sent out thoughts and prayers! It's a tough thing to handle but I'm surely not alone," Chaisson posted on Twitter. "I ask that you keep sending blessings and prayers my way as we trust in the Lord and his plan. See y'all next season!"

LSU hosts Southeastern Louisiana of the second-tier Football Championship Subdivision on Saturday night.

Chaisson's injury could mean more snaps for backup Andre Anthony, who like

Briefly

Thomas set to end holdout

RENTON, Wash. — Seahawks safety Earl Thomas appears set to end his lengthy holdout in time for the start of the regular season, even without a new contract.

Thomas posted to Instagram on Wednesday morning, saying he's never let his "teammates, city or fans down as long as I have lived and don't plan to start this weekend."

The post was a surprising conclusion to a long offseason of drama centered on whether Thomas would play out the final season of his contract, receive the extension he hoped for, or possibly be traded. Thomas' reaction to the lack of a resolution was clear in his post: "The disrespect has been noted and will not be forgotten."

"Father Time may have an undefeated record but best believe I plan on taking him into triple overtime when it comes to my career," Thomas wrote.

Seattle opens the season on Sunday at Denver.

In other NFL news:

■ Chiefs safety Eric Berry is day to day with a heel injury that has kept him out of most of training camp, and his status for Sunday's opener against the Chargers remains in question.

The exact nature of the injury has never been disclosed, but Chiefs trainer Rick Burkholder said Wednesday the five-time Pro Bowl selection is "getting better every day."

Berry missed most of last season after rupturing his Achilles tendon in the Chiefs' opener in New England. He was back on the field for summer workouts and began training camp, but was sidelined by the heel injury and did not play in any of Kansas City's preseason games.

2 Russians stripped of medals

MOSCOW — Russian athletes Tatyana Lebedeva and Maria Abramkova have been stripped of three world track championship medals because of doping.

The Athletics Integrity Unit, which handles doping cases in track and field, says Abramkova has had her javelin results from August 2008-August 2012 erased, stripping her of her world championship bronze from 2009 and gold from 2011.

Czech thrower Barbora Spotakova is in line to inherit the 2011 world title.

Lebedeva, now a senator in Russia, had her results from August 2008-August 2010 erased, including a silver medal from the 2009 worlds.

Abramkova and Lebedeva had already been disqualified from the 2008 Olympics after a 2016 retest of their samples came back positive. The process was delayed because they made an unsuccessful legal challenge.

Garcia makes Ryder Cup team

LONDON — Sergio Garcia, Ian Poulter, Henrik Stenson and Paul Casey are the European team's wild-card selections for the Ryder Cup.

European captain Thomas Bjorn made the announcement Wednesday, picking experienced players to balance a team containing five rookies among the automatic qualifiers.

The four picks have made 20 Ryder Cup appearances between them, and each has won at least 50 percent of their matches in golf's biggest team competition.

The eight qualifiers were Rory McIlroy, Francesco Molinari, Justin Rose, Thorbjørn Olesen, Jon Rahm, Tyrrell Hatton, Tommy Fleetwood and Alex Norén.

The Ryder Cup will take place at Le Golf National in Paris from Sept. 28-30. The United States won the last edition in 2016.

— Associated Press

AP Freelancer Bryan Lazine in Baton Rouge contributed to this report.

NFL



JOHN RAOUX/AP

Jacksonville Jaguars defensive back Barry Church, left, and defensive tackle Malik Jackson upend Atlanta Falcons tight end Logan Paulsen after a reception during the first half of a preseason game on Aug. 25 in Jacksonville, Fla.

Best: Jaguars' season is 'Super Bowl-or-bust'

FROM BACK PAGE

And in a Super Bowl-or-bust season for Jacksonville, the talent-laden group plans to do whatever it takes to hoist the Lombardi Trophy and join a list of revered defenses that have carried teams to championships.

"Every great defense has won it all," Pro Bowl linebacker Telvin Smith said. "That is what we want to be. A great defense is not mediocre. It is not to say you won a couple (division) championships. No, we want to say we dominated the world. That is the next step."

The Jaguars finished second in the NFL in yards (286.1 per game), points (15.8), sacks (55), takeaways (33) and interceptions (21) last year. Players wanted more and were admittedly disappointed with the final rankings.

Coach Doug Marrone has since used it as motivation, publicly and privately needing his defenders.

"Make no mistake about it, I like it when people have a chip on their shoulder," Marrone said. "I have a boulder on my shoulder."

The Jaguars feel they have plenty to prove, mostly because of how last season ended.

Jacksonville squandered a 10-point lead in the fourth quarter of the AFC championship game at New England. The vaunted defense gave up an 85-yard touchdown drive — the key play was a 21-yard completion on third-and-18 that left players openly questioning the scheme — and then allowed Tom Brady and Danny Amendola to hook up again for another score late.

Jacksonville returns 12 of its top 14 defenders from 2017, including six Pro Bowl selections. The only guys missing are veteran linebacker Paul Posluszny, who retired from the NFL after 11 seasons, and nickel cornerback Aaron Colvin, who signed a four-year, \$34 million contract with division rival Houston.

Even without them, the Jags will have eight starters on that side of the ball who have made

the Pro Bowl in the last four years. That's talent at every level of the defense, a mix of youth and experience.

All-Pro defensive end Calais Campbell is coming off a career year that included 14½ sacks and is the undisputed leader of what is widely considered the most disruptive front in the league. Defensive end Yannick Ngakoue (20 sacks and an NFL-leading 10 forced fumbles in two seasons) is a budding star. Malik Jackson is one of the most complete defensive tackles in the league. Fellow inside guy Marcell Dareus, acquired from Buffalo in late October, helped shore up a shaky run defense. Jacksonville ranked 30th in the league without him and eighth with him.

Speedy linebackers Smith and Myles Jack benefit most from the star-studded D-line, free to chase ball-carriers and make plays all over the field. Smith and Jack had a hand in three of Jacksonville's seven defensive TDs in 2017.

Jacksonville led the league in passing defense, giving up 20 yards a game fewer than anyone else, and was the only team in the league to have four players with at least four interceptions. Ramsey, Gipson and fellow safety Barry Church had four apiece.

While Ramsey emerged as the league's best — and most vocal — lock-down cornerback, A.J. Bouye was just as good on the opposite side. Bouye had six interceptions, knocked down a dozen more passes and didn't allow a touchdown in the regular season. According to Pro Football Focus, quarterbacks posted the lowest passer rating in the league when throwing his way.

"We put up all those numbers, but it is a new year," Bouye said. "There are teams that are really studying us now as a defense. We are just going to be ready for everything and we are going to continue to make plays."

The Jags can only hope to get their money's worth.

Foles set to lead Eagles with Wentz still sidelined

By ROB MAADDI
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA
A rough preseason had people doubting Nick Foles again.

The Super Bowl MVP is used to criticism and he's ready to lead the defending champion Philadelphia Eagles in the season opener against the Atlanta Falcons on Thursday night.

Foles was the toast of the town after spectacular performances in the NFC championship game against Minnesota and the Super Bowl victory over New England. But he didn't lead the offense to any points on 14 drives in two preseason games, threw two interceptions, lost two fumbles and got sacked six times, including a safety.

"I went out there and played," Foles said Tuesday. "I made mistakes. I did good things. I grew as a player. That's important. I wasn't trying to play it safe and with that you are going to make mistakes. Obviously, it isn't fun, but you get to watch film and deal with the emotions of throwing a pick, having a strip-sack, and I dealt with it in the preseason and keep learning from it and move forward."

Foles replaced Carson Wentz after the franchise quarterback tore two knee ligaments in Week 14 last season. He rallied the Eagles to a victory over the Los Angeles Rams to clinch the NFC East and played well in his first five quarters. He struggled in the



PHOTOS BY RON SCHWANE/AP

Philadelphia Eagles starting quarterback Carson Wentz still hasn't been cleared to play after tearing two knee ligaments in Week 14 of last season.

next five and some critics suggested Foles should be benched for Nate Sudfeld for the division playoff game against Atlanta. Coach Doug Pederson never lost confidence in Foles, and it paid off when he helped the Eagles win their first NFL title since 1960.

Foles had a 115.7 passer rating, completed 72.6 percent of his passes and threw for 971 yards, six TDs and one interception in



Atlanta Falcons (0-0)
at Philadelphia Eagles (0-0)
AFC Sports
2:15 a.m. Friday CET
9:15 a.m. Friday JKT

the playoffs.

Which version of Foles will show up this week?

"I think everyone tries to figure out sports. Sports, you never know," Foles said. "You go out there and play, you give everything you have. I think there's plenty of games that are middle ground that I've played."

"Now my middle ground is if I throw one touchdown, no interceptions, it's a bad game. I've set that bar high. I know that because I expect more for myself. What is a middle-ground game? We're going to be analyzed as players but I know as a player, you can be hard on yourself, but you have to learn from your mistakes and for me, I know by the week of preparation, but you never really know until you get in the game."

Foles wasn't officially named the starter until Monday, though it was obvious Wentz wasn't going to be ready to play. Wentz still hasn't been medically cleared.

"The more I play, the more I'll get in a rhythm," Foles said.



Nick Foles will start at quarterback in the season opener against the Atlanta Falcons on Thursday night. Foles filled in for injured starter Carson Wentz late last season and led the Eagles to an NFL title.

NFL PREVIEWS

Titans quarterback
Marcus Mariota
Don Wright/AP



AFC South

Jaguars aiming to repeat

Division transitioned from one of league's worst to be competitive

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — For so very long, the AFC South easily ranked among the NFL's worst divisions. Not anymore.

Both Jacksonville and Tennessee are coming off playoff berths, with the Jaguars a blown lead in the AFC championship game from playing in the Super Bowl for the first time in franchise history. The Jaguars and Titans also have their rosters from those trips back largely intact. Deshaun Watson and J.J. Watt are healthy again in Houston.

Even Andrew Luck is throwing passes and ready for the season in Indianapolis.

"It's crazy how nobody wanted to play in the AFC

South a couple years ago," Jaguars linebacker Telvin Smith said. "Now it seems like it'll be one of the premier [divisions] in the league."

The Jaguars not only are defending division champs, they are looking for a second straight playoff berth for the first time since 1998-99. The Titans changed coaches after consecutive 9-7 seasons because sweeping Jacksonville last season wasn't enough to win the AFC South, and another postseason would be their first back-to-back berths since 2007-08. If the Texans stay healthy, they are chasing their third division title in four years.

The Colts have a lot of rebuilding ahead, but a healthy Luck is so good that Indianapolis always has a chance.

Predicted order of finish: Jaguars, Titans, Texans, Colts.

Jacksonville Jaguars

Yes, the Jaguars not only are contenders, they are a popular pick to reach their first Super Bowl. That means dealing with high expectations from the start.

All-Pro cornerback Jalen Ramsey is keeping Jacksonville lively with his comments — positive and disparaging — on NFL quarterbacks. But Jaguars coach Doug Marrone has every key starter back, including 10 of 11 on one of the league's stingiest defenses featuring six Pro Bowlers.

Blake Bortles' right wrist has been surgically repaired, and he has an offense that led the NFL in rushing last season.

Tennessee Titans

Tennessee has a first-time head coach who won three Super Bowl rings playing linebacker in New England, Mike Vrabel. This franchise also has been busy building the past three years trying to compete not only in the division but the AFC. The Titans got a confidence boost by rallying for a wild-card win in Kansas City before a divisional loss in New England.

The Titans have new coordinator Matt LaFleur teaching Marcus Mariota his third offense in four seasons, and replaced aging DeMarco Murray by signing Dion Lewis to work with Derrick Henry. They also bolstered the defense by signing cornerback Malcolm Butler and drafting linebackers Rashawn Evans and Harold Landry.

Houston Texans

When they finished their first losing season since 2013 at 4-12 last year, 22 Texans were on injured reserve. Losses of Watson, Watt and LB Whitney Mercilus were most costly.

Watson was so thrilling while healthy. Yet the second-year quarterback will be tested if an offensive line anchored by center Nick Martin and featuring three new starters can't protect Watson any better than a year ago, when the Texans gave up the second-most sacks in the NFL.

As dominant as Watt was in winning the NFL Defensive Player of the Year award three times in four seasons, he now has to prove his body can survive a full season.

Indianapolis Colts

Finally improving the offensive line has been a big key in trying to end a three-year postseason drought. The Colts gave up a league-worst 56 sacks last season, and Luck won't stay healthy for long if they can't protect him. Indianapolis drafted guard Quenton Nelson at No. 6 overall. Signed two free agents, and has center Ryan Kelly coming back off an injury.

Owner Jim Irsay also fired Chuck Pagano and hired Frank Reich when Josh McDaniels decided to stay in New England.

Safety Malik Hooker is back from knee surgery that ended his rookie season after just seven games. But not even Luck might be able to cover up roster issues.

AFC North

High-octane Steelers favored again

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — As long as Mike Tomlin is standing on the Pittsburgh sideline, watching Ben Roethlisberger pass to Antonio Brown or give the ball to Le'Veon Bell, the Steelers will be favored to win the AFC North.

It makes no difference that Randy Fichtner is the new offensive coordinator, or that Roethlisberger turned 36 in March.

The Steelers are going to score points, and they're going to play their best against division rivals in big games.

Baltimore knows this all too well. Two

years ago, Bell rushed for 122 yards and Roethlisberger connected with Brown for a last-minute touchdown in a 31-27 victory that clinched the AFC North title.

Last December, Roethlisberger threw for 506 yards and two TDs, Bell scored twice and the Steelers beat the Ravens 39-38.

Baltimore hopes to turn things around this year, but if the Ravens are to break a run of three straight years without a playoff appearance, it will likely be as a wild card.

There are, by the way, two other teams in the division. Cincinnati and Cleveland deserve mention only because one will likely

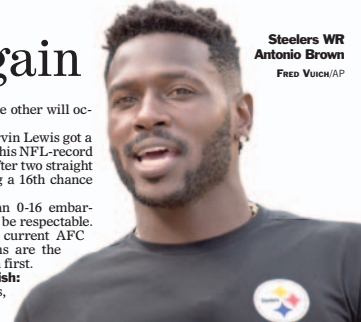
finish in third place and the other will occupy the cellar.

In Cincinnati, coach Marvin Lewis got a two-year extension despite his NFL-record 0-7 mark in the playoffs. After two straight losing seasons, he's getting a 16th chance to finally get it right.

Cleveland, coming off a 0-16 embarrassing, can only hope to be respectable. Since the creation of the current AFC North in 2002, the Browns are the only team never to finish in first.

Predicted order of finish: Steelers, Ravens, Bengals, Browns.

Steelers WR
Antonio Brown
Fritz Vucich/AP



Pittsburgh Steelers

Pittsburgh and its "Killer Bs" — Roethlisberger, Brown and Bell — have reached the playoffs four straight years. Yet all those trips to January have turned into just three postseason wins and no trips to the Super Bowl.

While the rejuvenated Roethlisberger believes he can play until he hears 40, this may be his last legitimate shot to win a third championship. Bell hadn't reported to sign his one-year franchise tender as of Wednesday, and is likely in his final season with the Steelers.

Pittsburgh's best chance to return to the Super Bowl will rely heavily on having Bell at the top of his game.

Baltimore Ravens

Ozzie Newsome is the only general manager the Ravens have ever had, running the show in Baltimore since the team arrived from Cleveland before the 1996 season.

Newsome will be stepping aside this season, to be replaced by current assistant GM Eric DeCosta, who in 2019 will finally get the job he wanted after spurning offers from several other clubs.

The Ravens have won two Super Bowls under Newsome, who in his final season has assembled a team that appears better than last year's model.

Cincinnati Bengals

Cincinnati's offense finished last in the league in yards last season, the worst showing in franchise history. The focus of their offseason was overhauling the line, which failed to protect Andy Dalton or open holes in the running game.

The Bengals fired line coach Paul Alexander, traded with Buffalo for left tackle Cordy Glenn, signed right tackle Bobby Hart and drafted center Billy Price in the first round from Ohio State. Despite all that, the right side of the line struggled against the Cowboys in the second preseason game, renewing concerns that problems remain.

Cleveland Browns

Cleveland coach Hue Jackson is 1-31 in two seasons with Cleveland, but Browns owners Dee and Jimmy Haslam still believe they hired the right coach in 2016. Time will tell, but the pressure is on Jackson from the get-go to win or there could be more changes in a team that has known mostly upheaval for 20 years.

The Browns drafted quarterback Baker Mayfield with the No. 1 overall pick, but the Heisman Trophy winner will begin the year as a backup to Tyrod Taylor, who helped Buffalo snap a 17-year postseason drought last season.

NFL PREVIEWS

AFC East

New England Patriots
quarterback Tom Brady
Bill KOSTRUB/AP



Everyone still chasing Brady

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Everyone's still chasing the New England Patriots in the AFC East.

Many of the faces change every year in Miami, Buffalo, New York — and even in Foxborough — but Bill Belichick and Tom Brady are constants in the division.

So are AFC East titles for the Patriots. They've won nine in a row, and 14 of the past 15. And, it certainly appears they're an excellent bet to add to that haul this season.

Not that Belichick is too comfortable with all of that.

"Each year is a new year, and each year has its own challenges," said the coach, whose 278 overall victories are third-most in NFL history. "Again, each year we all have to regain our — to the best we can — our ability to perform our jobs. That's what

I'm trying to do. I think that's what all of the players, all of the coaches, we're all trying to do that."

The Patriots don't lack motivation.

They're coming off a Super Bowl loss to the Philadelphia Eagles and had an interesting offseason. Brady sat out workouts, tight end Rob Gronkowski hinted at retirement and skipped voluntary workouts before rejoining his teammates, defensive coordinator Matt Patricia was hired as Detroit's coach, and wide receiver Julian Edelman was suspended four games for violating the NFL's policy on performance enhancers.

Brady turned 41 on Aug. 3 and has shown no signs of slowing, although some wonder if this might be the year he finally regresses. Well, not those who are around the five-time Super Bowl champion.

"He's hands-down just remarkable, it's amazing," Gronkowski said. "At age 41, I mean, there's coaches younger than us, younger than him on the roster. He looks younger than the coaches, he looks younger than everyone. The way he's moving, how just reliable he is at all times is just unbelievable and something to look up to."

Predicted order of finish: Patriots, Dolphins, Jets, Bills.

New England Patriots

One of the biggest questions for New England is who'll catch on in the passing game. Gone are Danny Amendola, Brandin Cooks, Malcolm Mitchell and Kenny Britt, Eric Decker retired, Jordan Matthews was released early in camp and Edelman is out the first four games.

Chris Hogan, Phillip Dorsett and newcomer Cordarrelle Patterson figure to be the primary options among wide receivers.

Still, Gronkowski will once again be Brady's main man, and rookie running back Sony Michel should see lots of passes his way once he's healthy from a knee issue.

Miami Dolphins

Ryan Tannehill is back under center for after being sidelined since December 2016 because of injuries to his left knee. The Dolphins are banking on him having a big comeback, or at least be better than Jay Cutler was last season. But Tannehill's durability is a concern, and if he goes down, Brock Osweiler and David Fales are the fallback options.

Some good news, though: The offensive line, anchored by veteran newcomer Josh Sitton, could be the best Tannehill has played behind. The Dolphins also added Amendola, Albert Wilson, Frank Gore and rookie Mike Gesicki at the skill positions.

N.Y. Jets

The Jets traded up to get to No. 3 in the draft, hoping to get a potential franchise QB. Sam Darnold fell right into New York's lap — getting the guy it wanted all along. The 21-year-old was given every opportunity to win the starting job against Josh McCown and Teddy Bridgewater, and the rookie did nothing but impress coaches. He is the future of the franchise — and that could mean right now.

"He's everything that you're looking for in a young quarterback," offensive coordinator Jeremy Bates said, "as far as the ability to go out there and the game is not too big for him."

Buffalo Bills

The Bills traded Tyrod Taylor to Cleveland in the offseason, then traded up five spots to draft Josh Allen with the seventh pick.

The satrong-armed former Wyoming star is raw and remains a work in progress. Playing behind a patchwork offensive line didn't help, but Buffalo might have to open the season with the rookie watching from the sideline.

Nathan Peterman will be the starter when the Bills — who snapped a 17-year playoff drought — open at Baltimore on Sept. 9.

Whoever is under center will have LeSean McCoy in the backfield. Even at 30, he's expected to be a workhorse.

AFC West

Chargers eager to end title drought

Associated Press

DENVER — It's like old times in the AFC West.

Jon Gruden glowering on the sideline. Philip Rivers surrounded by co-stars. An air-it-out quarterback in Kansas City. Von Miller sauntering around Denver again thanks to the arrival of a new pass rush partner in Bradley Chubb.

Widely regarded as the best defender in the draft, Chubb, the No. 5 pick overall, teams with Miller, Shane Ray and Shaq Barrett to form a fearsome front ready to

rattle the likes of Rivers, Patrick Mahomes II and Derek Carr, and reclaim the division crown they used to own when Peyton Manning was around.

The Broncos have a bona fide QB again themselves with the free agent signing of Case Keenum, who's out to prove his breakout 2017 season in Minnesota was no fluke.

He'll have to navigate a new division that features some of the league's best pass-rushing dogs ready to wreck game plans and quarterbacks alike.

The Chargers feature Joey Bosa and Mel-

vin Ingram as bookends to an ever-improving defense. The Chiefs have Dee Ford and Justin Houston to cover warts on the defense.

Oakland

has

Bruce

Irvin,

but not

star

Khalil Mack after he was

traded to the Bears.

Predicted order of finish: Chargers, Broncos, Chiefs, Raiders.



Broncos LB
Bradley Chubb
DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

San Diego Chargers

The Chargers ranked third in the league last year in yielding 17 points a game, but their run defense was their soft underbelly and kept them from an even bigger bounce-back season (9-7) in coach Anthony Lynn's first year.

Enter versatile rookie safety Derwin James, who was selected at No. 17 overall in the first round of the NFL Draft. James is learning to play deep as a free safety. He's also getting chances to rush the passer from multiple spots in the formation.

A solid defense would take pressure off Rivers in the quest for their first division title since 2009.

Denver Broncos

Wide receiver Emmanuel Sanders caught just 47 passes for 555 yards and two touchdowns last year when he was stifled by a nagging ankle injury and the Broncos' QB tussle that churned through Trevor Siemian, Brock Osweiler and Paxton Lynch.

Energized by a return to health and Keenum's arrival, Sanders is ready for a comeback, sporting a rookie's enthusiasm to go with his veteran moxie while building chemistry with his new quarterback.

"I'm just loving football these days," Sanders said.

Kansas City Chiefs

After trading away ball-protecting Alex Smith, Andy Reid is turning over the reins to Mahomes, the athletic Texas Tech QB who's a perfect fit for the Chiefs' steady diet of misdirection and multi-option reads.

Eric Bieniemy takes over as offensive coordinator, and he'll have plenty of firepower with reigning rushing champ Kareem Hunt, speedy Tyreek Hill, star tight end Travis Kelce and new wide receiver Sammy Watkins.

The Chiefs might need to pile up points to compete for a defense that was atrocious in the preseason after cutting Derrick Johnson and Tamba Hali and trading Marcus Peters.

Oakland Raiders

In a move that shocked players and fans, the Raiders traded Pro Bowl defensive end Khalil Mack to the Bears last week after he skipped offseason workouts and holding out in training camp for a new contract. Oakland's defense struggled the past few years even with Mack on the field. Gruden and new coordinator Paul Guenther will now need rookie Arden Key and veteran Bruce Irvin to make up for the loss.

Carr went from MVP candidate during a 12-win 2016 campaign to a struggling young passer a year ago. Much has been made of how he will mesh with Gruden.

SPORTS



Yankees strike late

Hitless through five innings, New York torches A's bullpen » **MLB, Page 26**

NFL

GENERATIONAL DEFENSE

Jags' unit has a chance to be among best in league history

By MARK LONG
Associated Press

SJACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Standing on the sideline and watching one-on-one drills, Jalen Ramsey had an up-close look at this touchdown.

The receiver used a triple move to beat one of Ramsey's fellow defensive backs.

Ramsey shook his head in disbelief and hollered a few choice words across the practice field.

"That ain't happening in a game," Ramsey said, noting how long it took the play to develop. "Our defense is too good."

Ramsey was being modest. Jacksonville's D has a chance to be great, maybe even generational.

The bold, brash Jaguars, who relied on stout defense to win the AFC South and reach the conference title game last season, believe they will be even better on that side of the ball this fall. The unit allowed too many rush-

Inside:

- Breakdown of each AFC division, Pages 30-31
- With Wentz still out, Foles ready to lead Eagles again, Page 29

ing yards early in 2017 and gave up too many big plays late, but pinned those problems on having three newcomers and three second-year players learning how to mesh while honing the details of coordinator Todd Wash's 4-3 scheme.

Nowadays, they feel like they've figured out each other and the playbook.

SEE BEST ON PAGE 29



SAM RICKE, ABOVE, AND JOHN RAOUX, RIGHT/TNS and AP

Above: All-Pro defensive end Calais Campbell is coming off a career year in which he had 14½ sacks. Right: Linebacker Myles Jack benefits from Jacksonville's star-studded defensive line, free to chase ball-carriers and make plays all over the field. The Jaguars return 12 of their top 14 players on defense.



Serena ousts Pliskova in quarterfinals » **US Open, Page 25**

